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APRIL 2025

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The second was a realization that was profound enough to make him want to stop feeding catfish forever.



Ryn Gargulinski
[Rynski] is a Cape Coral freelance writer, artist, speaker and healer who loves to entertain and inspire. In addition to more than 10 published books and multiple awards, she holds a BFA in Creative Writing, an MA in English literature, minister ordination, and Reiki and coaching certifications. Founder of the Sanctuary of the Wild Souls community, Rynski lives with her two happy hounds, one happy hubby and way too many crystals. Learn more at RynskiLife.com. Contact: Rynski@RynskiLife.com.



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Publisher
Coastal Media Communications, LLC

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Concur Or Object: Differing Viewpoints From Diverse Attorneys

Gavel Or Gamble: The High-Stakes Calculus Of Litigation

By Robson D.C. Powers, Esq.

High Risk, High Reward: When To Bet On Litigation

Suing can be a gamble. Knowing the cards you're holding can increase your odds of winning. Before you throw your chips on the courtroom table, it is wise to speak with an experienced litigation attorney and determine if you're playing a winning hand.

The Odds Are In: When To Place Your Legal Bets

• **House Rules: Have You Played All Your Cards?** Negotiation, mediation, arbitration – think of them as practice rounds. If the other side's bluffing and won't budge, or settlement talks crash and burn, then the courtroom's your only high-roller table.

• **Royal Flush Or Bust? Is Your Case A Winner?** Got solid evidence, airtight legal grounds, and a real shot at victory? Think documented damages, broken contracts, or undeniable negligence. A lawyer's your best dealer here – they'll tell you if you're holding a winning hand or a pair of twos.

• **The Pot vs. The Price: Is the Jackpot Worth The Bet?** Lawsuits bleed cash – legal fees, court costs, and your precious time. Is the potential payout a jackpot, or just enough to cover your losses? Small claims court or alternative dispute resolution might be a smarter play for a small-stakes game.

• **Snake Eyes And Wild Cards: The Risks You're Taking** Courtrooms are unpredictable. Counterclaims,



reputation hits, emotional drain – they're the wild cards that can turn a sure win into a devastating loss. Know the risks before you push all your chips in.

• **High Roller Or Low Stakes? Does The Dispute Matter?** Not every grudge requires a legal showdown. Is this a minor spat, or a game-changer for your finances, business, or sanity? If it's a high-stakes issue, the courtroom might be your best bet.

The Dealer's Advice: Play Smart, Win Big

A calculated gamble, guided by a savvy attorney, can tip the odds in your favor. When playing poker with professionals, it's best to have another professional on your side. Seeking the guidance of an experienced litigation attorney can make the difference between a winning hand and a bad bet.

By Kara B. Rogers, Esq.

Know When To Fold 'Em: The Potential Pitfalls Of Litigation

Sometimes, justice demands a showdown. But for most of us, a lawsuit is a high-stakes gamble. Even if you're dead certain you're in the right, diving into litigation can be a costly mistake. So, when should you cut your losses and go home?

The Red Flags: When Lawsuits Become Risky Business

• **Pocket Change Showdown? Think Twice:** Neighbor's tree fell on your fence? Contractor botched a repair? Sure, it stings. But is a \$500 or \$2,000 battle worth the legal war? Court costs can quickly devour your potential payout.



Small claims court? Maybe. Small claims is designed for unrepresented parties to obtain justice, but if you aren't comfortable going it alone and choose to hire a lawyer, that "win" could leave you in the red.

• **Empty Wallet, Empty Courtroom:** Big damages require a lawsuit, right? Not necessarily. Litigation bleeds money, especially for real estate, business, contract, and probate disputes. Contingency fees are rare in this type of litigation. You'll be fronting the cash, hoping for a future windfall. If your bank account's already running low, think twice before gambling on a lawsuit.

• **Chasing A Ghost: When The Defendant's Broke:** You can't squeeze blood from a stone, and you can't get money from someone who has none. "Judgment proof" defendants can be legal dead ends. Win the case, and you get nothing but a piece of paper. If you suspect the defendant doesn't have money, consider carefully before you throw good money after bad.

The Bottom Line: Know Your Odds

Suing is a deeply personal call, a complex game of risks and rewards. Before you roll the dice, chat with a seasoned litigator. They'll help you see the cards on the table and decide if you're playing a winning hand.

Robson D.C. Powers, Esq. and Kara B. Rogers, Esq. are the founders of Powers & Rogers, PLLC located at 615 Cape Coral Pkwy. W., Suite 206, Cape Coral, FL. Both have been selected as Rising Stars by Super Lawyers, a recognition bestowed on only 2.5% of attorneys in the state. They practice in civil litigation including business, real estate, construction, and probate litigation.

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Making Life Easier®

Past, Present And Future from page 1

residents, and the first vehicles crossing free of charge until 6 p.m., when a toll of 25 cents was implemented.

The bridge quickly exceeded expectations. A feasibility study had estimated that it would take until 1965 to reach 500,000 crossings, but by November 1964, that milestone had already been achieved. By 1967, four million vehicles had used the bridge, and by 1970, the number had surpassed 10 million. The toll, which fluctuated over the years, was finally removed in 1975 after the bonds were paid off.

Expansion And Growth: 1989 To Present

As Cape Coral continued to expand, so did the demand for improved infrastructure. In response, a parallel span was added to the bridge’s south side in 1989, creating a four-lane facility with separate east- and westbound lanes. To fund the expansion, a toll of 75 cents was reinstated, later increasing to \$1 in 1993 to help finance the Midpoint Memorial Bridge, which opened in 1997.

The Cape Coral Bridge’s expansion contributed to the city’s rapid growth. By 1990, Cape Coral’s population had surged past Fort Myers, making it one of Florida’s fastest-growing communities. The bridge not only facilitated daily commutes but also spurred economic development, with new businesses, industries, and residential areas flourishing along Cape Coral Parkway.



Construction of the Cape Coral Bridge – 1964

Sudoku

		2			1		4	7
	8	1			9			6
		5			4	9		1
	6		1		7	8	2	
	2	4	3	8	5		7	
8		9	4			5		
5			2			1	6	
2	3		5			7		

Answer in this issue

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Future Plans: 2026 And Beyond

With Cape Coral’s population continuing to grow and traffic exceeding 47,000 trips per day, further expansion is necessary. Lee County has announced plans to replace the westbound span by 2028. The project will begin with a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, complying with federal guidelines to secure state and federal funding. Construction is expected to start in 2026 and will take approximately two years to complete.

The new project will expand the bridge to six lanes, incorporating three lanes in each direction, modernizing tolling with an electronic system, and adding pedestrian and bicycle-friendly infrastructure. There is also ongoing discussion about preserving the old bridge as a pedestrian walkway, though final decisions have yet to be made.

Conclusion

From its humble beginnings as a debated infrastructure project to its role as a crucial transportation link, the Cape Coral Bridge has been a cornerstone of the city’s development. As plans move forward for modernization and expansion, the bridge will continue to serve as a vital connection between Cape Coral and Fort Myers, shaping the region’s future for generations to come.

Editor’s Note: To learn more about the history of the Cape Coral and the Cape Coral Bridge visit the Cape Coral Museum of History.

Cape Coral Museum Of History

Since its inception in 1987, the Cape Coral Museum of History has sought to discover, preserve, and share the history of Cape Coral through its archives, museum exhibits, and public programs. The museum is the official repository for the history of Cape Coral and serves as a public resource for all sectors of the local community, as well as international and U.S. tourists. Operated by the Cape Coral Historical Society, the museum exhibits artifacts, documents, and photographs pertaining to the history of Cape Coral and Southwest Florida.

Hours: Closed Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Admission: Adults \$10, \$5 for 62 and over, \$5 for military, \$3 for students, children 5 and under free.

Cape Coral Museum Of History, 544 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33990, (239) 772.7037, capecoralmuseum.org.

And We're Gonna Celebrate

ALL DAY SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30

10:00 a.m.	Ribbon Cutting and Parade — East End of the Bridge
10:30 a.m.	Ceremony and Entertainment — Memorial Arch
10:35	Drawing for Prizes — Memorial Arch
11:15 & 11:30	Drawing for Prizes — Memorial Arch
1:00	Parade from Publix To Four Freedoms Park
1:00-5:00	Family Activities and Entertainment — Four Freedoms Park • Fishing Contest • Gymnastic & Karate Exhibitions • Music • Dog Show
2:00-3:00-3:45	Drawings for Prizes
7:00-10:00	Dances (Folk, Square, and Rock)

★ GIFTS ★ GIVEAWAYS

Register with these merchants all day today for the drawings scheduled throughout tomorrow's celebration:

Ann's Bath Shop 1229 S. Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-4363 Cape Scooter & Mower Center 820 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-3859 Bob Deming Hardware 1508 Viscaya Parkway 542-3534 Dolphin Marina 1506 S.E. 46th Street 542-7097 The Dressing Room 1422 S.E. 47th Terr. 542-1970 Firestone Store 1003 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-5182 The Fox Lady Boutique 1105 A Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-1711 Gordon Path 4728 Vincennes Blvd. 542-0535 Gordon's Pool Service, Inc. 4635-A Del Prado Blvd. 542-3046 H/O Systems, Inc. 811 Miramar Street 542-6611 Harmon Photo Center 1217 Cape Coral Parkway 542-3815 Henry's Union 76 1402 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-2630 Johnson Paints 1317 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-5656	Lafoun's Pet Center 4610 Del Prado Pkwy. 542-5922 The Living Room of Today Interior Design 1610 S.E. 47th Street 542-8010 Lag's & Sun N Surf Men & Ladies Fashion 1231 Cape Coral Parkway 542-2124 Michelle's House of Fashion 1323 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-1886 Neptulus Inn 1538 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-2121 Norgetown Laundry & Dry Cleaning 4608 Del Prado Pkwy. N.Y. Pizza Delight 916 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-1120 Oliver's Flaming Hearth at the Del Prado Corner Del Prado & Miramar 542-3151 The Pellet 1529 S.E. 47th Terr. 542-4043 Publix Super Market 1016 Cape Coral Parkway 542-9910 Quellity Card Shoppe 1331 Cape Coral Parkway 542-4503 Robb & Storkley Furniture of Cape Coral Cape Coral Shopping Plaza 542-3131	Rodino's Family Shoe Store 1212A Cape Coral Parkway 542-5684 Roxanne's Ladies Apparel 1426 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-3059 Royal Flor Furniture Inc. 1013 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-3333 Sandy's Discount Music & Gifts 1335 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-8378 Bill Smith Hardware 1399 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-3166 Bill Smith Appliances 1229 S.E. 47th St. 542-8550 Sam Tamers Inc. 1308 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-1125 Sunshine TV 1116 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-2530 Walter's Bicycle Center 1401 S.E. 47th Terr. 542-4474 Webb's Gentlemen's Apparel 1329 Cape Coral Pkwy. 542-5450 Regnone's Meats 4406 Del Prado Blvd. 542-7878 Willy's Bavarian Restaurant 4725 Del Prado Blvd. 542-0074
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Business Spotlight

Tap Into Your Inner Beauty At Downtown Boutique And Salon

By Ryn Gargulinski, Staff Reporter

You may walk into Sherry MacDonald’s downtown boutique or adjacent salon for a new outfit or haircut – but you’ll walk out with so much more. From conception to manifestation, both shops were designed with a single purpose in mind.

“It’s a space anyone and everyone to come to feel like their best self,” said Sherry about May-Rah-Kee Salon and D.Y.B. Boutique. She noted comfort and confidence is what truly makes your inner beauty shine though. Both businesses offer the means, talent, experience and staff to help you make that happen.

A hair stylist for 37 years, Sherry opened May-Rah-Kee Salon seven years ago to help bring a high level of professionalism to the Cape’s hairstyling scene. D.Y.B. (Dress Your Best) Boutique came to life last year, celebrating its official ribbon cutting this March. It was born out of a deep need.



Boutique and salon owner Sherry MacDonald encourages everyone to experiment and have fun with style, as evidenced by this pairing of a T-shirt with a sequined skirt.

The items found at D.Y.B. are not only high-quality and unique, but they need to meet specific criteria before they’re even allowed into the shop. They must be from companies that are women-owned, not found on Amazon, eco-friendly, and give back in some way.



The Invasive Fin jewelry line helps save reefs in the Caribbean by responsibly harvesting the fins of invasive lionfish to transform into jewelry.

Like The Invasive Fin jewelry line, which is handcrafted from the fins of lionfish. Lionfish are an invasive species with a detrimental impact on reefs in the Caribbean. The jewelry designer is a marine biologist who spearfishes for the lionfish, uses the meat responsibly, and then creates jewelry out of the fins.



D.Y.B. Boutique is located on Coronado Parkway, just south of Cape Coral Parkway East, with an insurance agency on one side and May-Kah-Ree Salon on the other.

D.Y.B. Boutique
4825 Coronado Pkwy.
DYBfashionboutique.com

May-Rah-Kee Salon
4821 Coronado Pkwy.
MayRahKeeSalon.com

“We like to say they’re saving the environment one earring at a time,” said Cindy Surgeon, D.Y.B. retail and brand specialist. Cindy adores the items at the shop so much, she actually says goodbye to each piece as it’s sold.

She also loves working in such a supportive environment, as does the rest of the team. Twenty-six-year-old Emily Bernaquer was just 19 when she started at the salon’s front desk. She now manages both the salon and the boutique. Her favorite part of the job?

“Being with women who uplift each other all day,” she said, “who make each other feel beautiful.”

This concept applies to the team members as well as every single person who walks in either door. Sherry makes a point to greet and speak with each client or customer, encouraging all to embrace who they really are.

“I wish people would experience more of not letting themselves be judged by what they wear and experience more of their own inner styles,” she said. “Let yourself do what you want to do. If it feels good on you, wear it!”

Giving back is also part of the overall agenda for both businesses, with the goal of helping others learn, grow and glow. The salon has long offered haircutting classes and associateships. Sherry is aiming to use her space at the salon and boutique as a hosting spot for events.

She’s also eager to partner with other boutiques and organizations. Ideas include a “Shop and Adopt” event to help animal shelters and a “Boutique Hop” in the style of a pub crawl.

Just because it’s called a boutique doesn’t mean it’s over-the-top expensive. The same holds true for the services at the hair salon.

“Don’t feel intimidated,” Sherry said. “It’s OK to come in and look and never buy. Go out and talk about the great things you saw.” The salon services start with a consultation and targeted suggestions. “We have a beauty budget for everyone, with different levels of pricing.”

The goal is not to make a bazillion dollars – but to make a bazillion smiles. When asked about her favorite part of running her businesses, Sherry was quick to answer.

“The happiness I see in people, the staff, the clients that come through,” she said, “to know I had a part in creating something wonderful for someone else.”



The brands you’ll find at D.Y.B. Boutique must be women-owned, eco-friendly, not found on Amazon and give back in some way.



The brands you’ll find at D.Y.B. Boutique must be women-owned, eco-friendly, not found on Amazon and give back in some way.



May-Rah-Kee Salon was named after the Greek concept of “Meraki” that means to do something with soul, creativity or love. This sign was a gift from a client.



D.Y.B. Boutique offers unique clothing, jewelry, accessories and gifts that must meet certain criteria before they’re even allowed in the shop.

Patriot Pets: Animals Are All In The Family



By Ryn Gargulinski,
Staff Reporter

By the time most kids are just getting ready to learn to a ride a bicycle, Shane Reinhardt had already been riding horses for years. His first horseback ride was as a baby – held in front of an adult, of course – and his love of animals and exploring the great



Dianna and Shane Reinhardt opened Cape Coral's Patriot Pets & Supplies of Florida in 2011.



The Patriot Pet small animal collection generally includes bunny rabbits.



Turtles are some of the regular animals in stock at this Cape Coral pet shop.



Snakes, like this ball python, are typically on hand at Patriot Pets.



Patriot Pets is stocked with everything from dog toys to live birds, with pet food, supplies and small animals in between.



Shane keeps a regular supply of some of the most popular aquarium fish.

outdoors naturally expanded from there.

So much so, that he had an immediate answer when his mom Dianna Reinhardt asked him a straightforward question more than 14 years ago.

"I came home one day, and she said, 'Want to open a pet shop?'" Shane recalls. "I said, 'Sure.'"

Patriot Pets was born, opening its doors in 2011. Named in honor of their big military family (not a New England football team), the shop enjoys a steady stream of customers.

The laid-back vibe of the place is definitely a draw, as is the array of pet foods and supplies at the ready. Stocking a solid lineup of fish, birds, lizards, snakes, spiders, bunny rabbits and other live animals is another plus, as are the pet grooming services.

But what really sets Patriot Pets apart is the wealth of knowledge. Between the two owners and staff, you're walking into a combined 80 years of experience caring for all types of animals.

"I was born into it," Shane said when asked how he developed a fondness for animals. The same holds true for Dianna. Originally from Missouri, the Reinhardt family vacationed as Southwest Florida snowbirds who made the permanent move to the area in the late 1990s when Shane was 6 years old.

Love them! Always have what I need and usually cheaper than the big chain pet places. He actually talked me into switching dog food a couple months back! My dogs love it!

★★★★★ ~ Christopher G.

Love it...best customer service by far. The staff there was so friendly and helpful. Got a pair of sugar gliders recently and they are thriving and loving their new home. Will be returning again and again for supplies and more pets along the way. I highly recommend.

★★★★★ ~ Cristal G.

Now living on Pine Island, both Shane and Dianna grew up around animals that ran the gamut from horses to dogs, birds to fish. Dianna continues to breed several dogs and is one heck of a trainer. She even taught a Great Dane and other slobbering dog breeds to lick their lips on demand so they don't leave puddles of drool all over the place.

And we can't forget the lovable hairless rat named Mrs. Bigglesworth. She doubled as a Patriot Pets mascot, hanging out on the front counter or Shane's shoulder while he helped customers.

Being an avid Boy Scout helped grow Shane's knowledge of and excitement for the great outdoors. It also played a role in the first animals he chose to keep as pets. Always a fan of "exotic creepy-crawly things," he chose lizards and snakes because he wanted something easy to maintain as he knew he'd often be away at camp.

As a youngster showing a level of maturity not seen in some adults, you can bet Shane is equally as level-headed when it comes to running a business with his mom. Mother and son work side-by-side six days a week – and thoroughly enjoy it.

Best pet store in town! They care about their customers and their animals. Its a nice Family owned and operated establishment. Been going to them for 5 plus years. Wont go anywhere else!

★★★★★ ~ Shawn Marie P.

I absolutely LOVE this place. We have bought over 30 different tarantulas here, Shane is very knowledgeable and has always been kind and informative. He's taken the time to explain species and risks of owning them, but also very patient when we ask to see 10+ different ones per visit.

If you want a great experience, at a knowledgeable, family owned store, this is your best bet. They have a great selection of pets and supplies, and who doesn't want to help support a fantastic family business?

★★★★★ ~ Vee W.



When asked what they do for fun, they both answered with a laugh, "Work."

Dianne and Shane are content with their business – one that is still humming along after three hurricanes and past economic downturns. Their hope is to keep the shop going at a steady pace, which appears likely to happen.

"Customers' kids have kids that come in now," Shane said, exemplifying the generational loyalty. "We're happy where we're at, maintaining things where they are and helping people with animals."

Patriot Pets & Supplies of Florida

1242 SW Pine Island Road #47

(239) 242-7387



Powering Southwest Florida For 85 Years

By Karen Ryan, APR, CPRC
– LCEC Public Relations
Director

Cape Coral residents may be familiar with LCEC as their local electric provider, and the cooperative’s roots in Southwest Florida run deep – stretching back to 1940. It all began when George Judd sold the Mariana Grove power plant to North Fort Myers residents, forming what would become Lee County Electric Cooperative (LCEC). At the time, LCEC served just 158 members across 15 miles of power lines – about one percent of Lee County’s population.

Within its first year, LCEC expanded service to Pine Island, Sanibel, and Captiva. By 1941, it retired its original power



plant in North Fort Myers and partnered with Florida Power & Light (FPL) to purchase electricity at a wholesale rate.

World War II temporarily slowed expansion, but once the war ended, LCEC grew rapidly. It acquired surplus transmission lines from the Buckingham Air Force Base and extended service southward, reaching Chokoloskee Island by 1951 and Marco Island soon after. In 1958, Cape Coral saw its first connection when LCEC powered six model homes – marking the beginning of the city’s electrification. Cape Coral is now one of the largest regions in the LCEC service territory.

For decades, LCEC has continued to grow alongside the communities it serves. Today, the cooperative powers over 257,000 homes and businesses across Southwest Florida, maintaining more than 8,400 miles of energized power lines.



From its humble beginnings to its role as a cornerstone of the region’s growth, LCEC remains committed to keeping the lights on in Cape Coral forever.

Karen Ryan, APR, CPRC is the Public Relations Director for LCEC. She has been on the LCEC team since 1997 and has been writing about energy safety, savings and utility cooperatives for decades. LCEC served nearly 250,000 members in a six-county service territory and has been delivering electricity in Cape Coral since 1958. Karen serves on the Board of Directors for United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades and the Edison & Ford Winter Estates and is a past member of the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce. She is also a past-president of the Florida Public Relations Association and the Edison Festival of Light and past chair of the American Heart Association Heartwalk and United Way campaign.

Move Over, Eggs – Easter Potatoes Are Taking Over!

What began as a meme has now become a real alternative for families looking to celebrate Easter creatively and affordably. With the rising cost of eggs, some parents are turning to painting potatoes instead of the traditional Easter egg decorating.

The potato industry has taken notice and embraced the trend. The idea of decorating potatoes – more cost-effective than inflation-affected eggs – is gaining popularity. The concept originally surfaced in memes joking about children having to hunt for potatoes due to high egg prices. Now, the trend is being actively promoted as a fun and affordable alternative to traditional Easter activities.

Painting potatoes offers several advantages over eggs. Unlike eggs, potatoes don’t require boiling or any preparation beforehand. Additionally, any undiscovered Easter potatoes left outside are biodegradable. For those using food-safe paint or dye, the decorated potatoes can still be eaten after the holiday.

However, painting a potato does present some challenges. The uneven, rough surface of a potato makes it a tricky canvas, and children might find their designs looking more abstract than anticipated. Still, families are embracing the novelty of this new Easter tradition.

Last year, this trend gained significant media attention, even being mentioned on major news outlets and talk shows. This year, resources are available to guide families eager to join in on the fun.

How To Paint Easter Potatoes

For those looking to give this trend a try, here are some helpful tips:

- **Prepare your workspace:** Cover your table with newspapers or a plastic tablecloth for easy cleanup.
- **Use gloves:** This helps keep hands clean from paint or dye.
- **Choose your medium:** For edible potatoes, use food-safe dye or paint. Applying food coloring directly to the potato results in more vibrant colors.
- **Sealing your design:** If you want to keep your potatoes purely decorative, a coat of hairspray can help prevent the colors from rubbing off.
- **Enhance your colors:** A white primer coat will help make painted designs stand out.
- **Pick the right paint:** Avoid watercolor paints, as they won’t adhere well. Instead, use acrylic or tempera paints for better coverage.

Additional Easter Potato Activities

For added fun, parents can cut potatoes in half to create Easter stamps. By carving shapes into the flat side of a potato, children can use them to stamp designs onto paper, creating festive artwork.

Potatoes can also be used in Easter scavenger hunts. Unlike eggs, missed potatoes won’t spoil as quickly and are biodegradable. However, families with pets should be mindful, as raw potatoes are not safe for dogs.

Research highlights that potatoes rank high in affordability and nutrition. They contain key nutrients such as potassium, fiber, protein, and vitamins C and E.

So, whether you’re looking to save money, try something new, or just have a fun and creative Easter activity, consider swapping out your eggs for some colorful, decorated potatoes this year!



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Cape Coral Construction Industry Association Event: City Aims To Take Pain Out Of Permitting Process

By Ryn Gargulinski, Staff Reporter

What Does The Development Services Department (DSD) Do?

- Code compliance
- Permitting services
- Building
- City planning
- Land development

Fast, easy and painless are words typically associated with things like waterslides and disco dancing – not a city’s codes, permits and building processes. But the Cape Coral Development Services Department (DSD) is working to change that.



Three DSD leaders were on hand at the Cape Coral Construction Industry Association (CCCIA) March membership meeting to share the slate of department improvements, initiatives and ideas that are being discussed or already underway. They were DSD Director Brett Limbaugh, Deputy Director Matthew Grambow, and Building Official Shane Kittendorf.

While the info they shared may have been new to the more than 70 members and guests in attendance at La Venezia Ballroom, regular meetings with the DSD are par for the course for CCCIA Executive Director Lynn Boldissar.

“Lynn is one heck of an advocate for you,” said Director Limbaugh. He noted her input on issues across the construction industry let him hit the ground running soon after his appointment in October.

Unlike most new director orientations that may take place in a conference room or office, Limbaugh’s first week was spent at the emergency operations center as Hurricane Milton was coming to town. Previously working in Colorado, Limbaugh’s Cape Coral post is the fourth time he’s served in a director role. Based on his passion, he’s well-suited for the position.

“My main love is rewriting codes to make things easier,” Limbaugh told the audience. “Speed is what it’s all about. At the end of the day, we want to make sure we have a quality product – but that it doesn’t take a year to get there.”

Limbaugh’s appointment as director gave another advantage to the DSD. For the first time in more than two years, all full-time development team positions are filled.

“We really want to establish that partnership mentality between the city and the [construction] industry,” said Deputy Director Grambow. “We’re making really good progress on that.”



Development Services Department Director Brett Limbaugh (right), Deputy Director Matthew Grambow (center), and Building Official Shane Kittendorf (left).

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CCCIA Executive Director Lynn Boldissar with Membership and Sponsorship Sales Manager Wade Kunding.

Both Limbaugh and Grambow emphasized the department’s openness to feedback, asking for input on items that need resolution. That’s when Limbaugh added three magic words: “Tell us what’s making you crazy.”

Well, since you asked ... Long waits for permits are one of the greatest pain points affecting the industry. Grambow said part of the solution here is a total reorganization of the DSD permitting service division.

The goal is to have a five-day processing time for commercial property permits, two-day processing for residential, and one-day processing for trades.

Audience members wanted to know what else was being done to shorten seemingly eternal wait times for other things – like irrigation certificates.

“You go in, do a map, draw up the irrigation system – and boom! – get the thing to set up and go,” said one audience member. “But that’s not happening. It’s taking over a month to get the certificate.”

Grambow noted how there is a “great need for additional education for permit applicants.” Over the past 12 months, he cited an average of 2.61 re-submissions per permit across the board. The solution here is to plan focused events for applicants that outline how to most effectively submit applications that follow the new regulations.

Extensive wait times are also common for getting revisions processed, according to another audience member. He gave the example of initially needing a gas permit for an appliance, an outdoor grill, that was subsequently taken out of the overall plan.

The process is to then apply for a revision that indicates the grill was eliminated and the gas permit no longer needed. But any response to the revision was a long time coming.

Grambow explained the great delay here was due to the existing workflow. As it stands, select employees spend the first couple of hours each day looking through a long list of applications to find those flagged as revisions.

Whatever revisions they can process during that time gets processed. Others get to wait for the next day, or the next.

“We need to formalize an informal process that’s not working the way it should,” Grambow said, mentioning a separate division with a dedicated revision queue needs to be created.

And what about those who feel like they’re playing roulette every time they call the department or try to glean updated forms from the website? Some have gotten different answers or requirements depending on who you talk to or what form you happen to download.

“Would you be open to a standard operating procedure for every single permit?” asked Kaiya Letzler, permit technician for Bulldog Atlantic Construction Design.

She outlined issues she’s had with forms on the site, typically with multiple versions of the same form. Each one is a bit different, and it’s unclear which is the most recent as their organization is about as precise as, say, a forgotten sock drawer.

A few things are going on here, all of which the DSD noted it’s eager to address. The website is expected to be cleaned up and more effectively maintained going forward.



Development Services Department Building Official Shane Kittendorf, Director Brett Limbaugh, and Deputy Director Matthew Grambow with CCCIA Executive Director Lynn Boldissar.



CCCIA President Keith Quackenbush with the Bulldog Atlantic Construction Design crew.



More than 70 CCCIA members and guests attended the CCCIA March membership meeting to hear input from three Development Services Department leaders.

Limbaugh said he had already asked division managers to clear out all redundant documents and mentioned stricter protocols for uploading new documents.

“The idea of a website is something you can use,” he said, “not an archive to store our documents.”

When it comes to getting different answers from different people, part of the problem is the city’s outsourcing of 25 percent of document reviews to third-party reviewers – who evidently may not be aware of specifics for the Cape Coral DSD.

A change in the process of onboarding new reviewers (and educating existing ones) would be the solution here, ensuring everyone has consistent information across the board.

Better sharing of info across departments is another issue that needs addressing. “City departments can seem siloed,” Grambow said, “with the right hand not talking to the left hand.”

He said the DSD is in a unique position to help amend that. “We are almost like the quarterback, handling permits for everything.” And from everyone, from homeowners and builders to public works and fire departments.

We are trying to embrace this position,” he said, focusing on “efficiency, transparency, education and coordination” to help improve the commercial building permitting process as well as the department as a whole. More info on DSD can be found on the city’s website at www.capecoral.gov.

Catch The Action

April On The Water

By Capt. Bill Russell

A month that has a lot to offer anglers across the coastal waters of Southwest Florida, April holds the potential for some of the best fishing of the year and great weather.

Spanish mackerel return to area waters both inshore and offshore. They are roaming in schools looking for food throughout inshore and nearshore waters. Look for birds working the water as mackerel push schooling bait to the water's surface. Artificial reefs in the Gulf of Mexico may hold large numbers of Spanish mackerel, plus a few of their large cousins, king mackerel or kingfish. Groups of birds dipping to the water is a dead giveaway. Spanish mackerel are fast, hard fighting, and good on the table if prepared fresh.

Reefs in the Gulf within sight of land hold a variety of fish on any given day. Good eating snapper, grunts, mackerel, and the last run of spawning sheepsheads, plus



hard fighting barracuda, sharks, goliath grouper, and a big cobia or permit are all a good possibility fishing around the numerous public reefs.

Anglers can get a jump start on tarpon season and often locate schooling fish with little angling competition. May and

June are the months that get most of the attention. Schools of tarpon are milling around waters off the Gulf beaches ranging in depths from just off the beach out to 30 or more feet. Tarpon are moving inshore as well, as they are on the move and could appear anytime and anywhere.

Warm water brings numerous sharks to our area on the hunt for their next meal and a great challenge for willing anglers. Blacktip and spinner sharks are some of the most challenging fish to catch. Not only do they possess a great fight, but they also make violent jumps and they're extremely fast. Many of the big spinners explode into such a wild spinning leap it's difficult to keep them from exploiting the weak link in your rigging. A large spinner or blacktip will rival a tarpon for sheer power and fight. Also moving in with the tarpon are the hammerhead and bull sharks, the largest of which are hanging around the tarpon schools awaiting a fish in distress for an easy meal.

About every kid or young adult that goes fishing wants to catch a shark. It's not always possible, but it's good if you can match the size of the shark you target to the kid's age. You get a young kid hooked up to a big shark and it may be more fish than they can manage. There are plenty of sharks of various species ranging in size from 3 to 5 feet, this is a great size for most kids. For that matter, it's a good size for most adults!

With water temperature in the mid-70s and above, the snook bite can be very good. Snook may range in size from little guys barely a foot long to big girls pushing 40 inches or more. Snook are on the move, as an ambush feeder look for them around areas with structure and good tidal flow.

Redfish also appreciate the warmer days and higher tides. A properly placed bait under the shade of a mangrove shoreline, dock, or around an oyster bar may result in hard fighting reds. More often than not, if you hook one redfish, more are nearby. Like snook, size can vary widely with the largest measuring over 30 inches.

Our largest sea trout of the year come this month as their spring spawn is in full swing. Trout over 20 inches are common with fish measuring 24 inches and above possible. Look for trout throughout the inshore waters with a grassy bottom, around oyster bars, sand holes and transition areas. Often the largest trout are caught while snook fishing.

Keep your options open as this is a month with so many fishing opportunities that it's easy to start the day with one species in mind and get sidetracked with another. April is a month with good weather and the potential for great fishing, get on the water and take advantage of it!

Stay up to date with fishing regulations by visiting the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission at www.myfwc.com. Also, upload the Fish Rules app on your phone. It has current regulations with pictures to help identify fish. If you turn on your GPS location the Fish Rules app updates to your location. In my opinion, it is more accurate and up to date than FWC's website.

For charter information, please contact us at Gulf Coast Guide Service and "Catch the Action" with Capt. Bill Russell, call or text (239) 410-8576, website: www.fishpineisland.com, email: gcl2fish@live.com.

Capt. Bill Russell is a native and lifelong resident of Pine Island who has spent his entire life fishing the waters surrounding Pine Island and Southwest Florida. For the past 29 years, Bill has been a professional fishing guide who takes pride in customizing each trip to ensure everyone on board has a great time and will return again. Come join us and "Catch the Action."



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Friends Of The Cape Coral Library

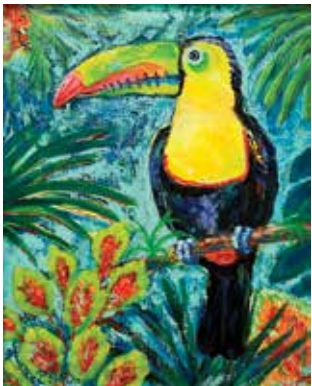
Art On Display: Paintings And Fused Glass Exhibit At Cape Coral Library

Changing exhibitions in the Cape Coral Library’s expansive art gallery are sponsored by the Friends of the Cape Coral Library and are designed to afford local artists the opportunity to share their work in this public forum and to sell their art directly without commissions. The library is located at 921 SW 39th Terrace, off of Mohawk Parkway, and the latest exhibit will be open during their regular business hours from March 5 through May 5.

Artwork by Pat St. Onge will be on display on the walls of the library’s gallery. Pat’s constantly evolving “toolbox” of painting techniques has grown out of her years of experience in both fine and commercial art. Having worked in a variety of media, Pat states that her favorite medium is usually in whichever one she is currently using. Recently, she’s enjoyed incorporating paint-pouring methods with traditional brushwork. St. Onge finds teaching and sharing her knowledge a great source of satisfaction – and a lot of fun. She has taught classes for adults and children at various venues since the 1970s. Pat grew up in Lakewood, Ohio, where she attended Cooper School of Art in



Pat St. Onge, Serene Egret



Pat St. Onge, Toucan in Paradise

Cleveland for her foundation classes. She earned her BFA at Quincy University in Illinois, and her MA in Art History at the University of Findlay in Ohio. She studied digital art pre-press and basic web design while attending Rhode Island School of Design in Rhode Island. In 2016, Pat and her husband retired to Fort Myers. She continues to expand her skills via classes in oils under Dennis Morton at the Cape Coral Art League, where she also teaches beginner and intermediate acrylics. Pat’s gallery associations have included Wild Child Art Gallery, The Gallery of Matlacha, the Alliance for the Arts, Matlacha Menagerie and, most recently, Sea Legs Art Gallery in Tarpon Springs – in addition to shows at the Cape Coral Art League where she’s been awarded many ribbons for her artwork.

Visitors to the library gallery will enjoy seeing glass creations by Pat Johnson in the three display cases. Johnson is a fused glass artist as well as a managing member at Harbour View Gallery in Cape Coral. She received her associate’s in art and science degrees from a local community college in Western Massachusetts. She continued her education at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Mass., majoring in Art Education. Johnson’s experience and expertise in the visual arts is quite varied. She started her journey in art using pencils, charcoal and oils and then moving to acrylics, clays, all aspects of photography and glass fusion. In the early days of her career, Pat could be found working in several photography labs supervising art departments and working with many local photographers. Retouching, airbrushing, negative retouching and restoration of old photographs were all done by hand. Pat also worked in the furniture industry as a store manager and buyer and later ran a small business in the interior design field. These various positions throughout her life revolved around her creative and artistic background and her ability to work with the general public. Pat Johnson’s love of glass fusing was sparked when she first came to Cape Coral and took classes through the Cape Coral Art Center. She knew immediately that this was the medium for her, started using glass as a means to express herself, and has now been working on her craft for about 15 years.



Pat Johnson, color wheel



Pat Johnson, sunset on wood base with nightlight.

For information about library exhibits, contact Art Gallery Chairperson Monica Rahman by email to gallery@capefriends.org or visit www.capefriends.org. Follow “Friends of the Cape Coral Library” on Facebook.

Busy Day At Southwest Florida Reading Festival For Friends Of The Cape Coral Library’s Volunteers

The Friends of the Cape Coral Library were happy to participate again this year in the Southwest Florida Reading Festival held on the Fort Myers Regional Library campus on March 1. This year, we were proud to sponsor author Debbie Macomber at the popular annual event.

Macomber is a No. 1 *New York Times* bestselling author with more than 200 million copies of her books in print worldwide. Her novels bring to life compelling relationships that embrace family and enduring friendships, uplifting her readers with stories of connection and hope. Debbie’s books have spent over 1,000 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Fifteen of these novels hit the number one spot!



Monica R. posed with Debbie Macomber.

Celebrated as “the official storyteller of Christmas,” Debbie’s annual Christmas books are beloved with six of them having been crafted into original Hallmark Channel movies

The author’s presentation at the Reading Festival, which touched on her life story and long journey to get published, entertained as well as inspired the large audience who came to hear her speak.

Our booth at the festival was super busy all day as kids aged 5 through 12 were provided with information about the 19th Annual Children’s Environmental Art Contest Coloring the Earth sponsored by the Friends of the Cape Coral Library



Two young artists at our booth.



Mom and child visiting our booth.



Young artist and her mom

and the Cape Coral-Lee County Public Library. The theme this year is Let’s Protect Our Mangroves! We had supplies available for youngsters to create an original drawing or painting showing how we can protect this precious species from habitat loss and other main threats. We’re very grateful to our own member volunteers as well as the wonderful students from Florida Gulf Coast University who helped the budding young artists at our booth!

You can also find an entry form with details about the children’s environmental art contest via a link on the Friends of the Cape Coral Library home page: www.capefriends.org or pay a visit in person to the Youth Services area of the Cape Coral Library located at 921 SW 39th Ter.



FOCCL volunteer Joy M. helping at our busy booth.



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Home Is Where The Heart Is

By John Nicolette, P.T.

Connie and Michael Valentine always knew that they wanted the benefits of a life plan community.

The National Poll on Healthy Aging reports that 88 percent of older adults feel that it's important to remain at home while they age, and the Valentines are no different. They live in a neighborhood they love, and they've worked hard for the place they call home.

When the Valentines began planning for their future, they had the goal of aging well, with a support system in place. They were exploring independent living communities, particularly Gulf Coast Village in Cape Coral, which offers the full scope of senior living from independent living to skilled nursing.

The Valentines were familiar with Gulf Coast Village for over 30 years, as Michael operated a nearby business, but they'd never lived in the community. They found themselves wishing there was a way for them to have the concept of independent living, but in their home. Little did they know, there was.

Finding The Right Program

Senior Choice at Home, a comprehensive, membership-based life plan at home program created in partnership with Gulf Coast Village, offers healthy, independent older adults a way to remain in their homes as they age. It provides members with the flexibility to live their lives freely, while knowing that they have access to care if they ever need it. It's a safety net, which is crucial as you grow older. This program is a unique concept and Senior Choice at Home was the first of its kind in Florida.

"We want to be in our home together as long as we can," said the Valentines. As they approach 60 years of marriage, togetherness is a valuable concept to the Valentines. The pair have been together since the fourth grade, when they met in Parkersburg, West Virginia. Age in place programs make this a possibility for many healthy, independent



people – they're able to stay in the homes they've worked so hard to create, while spending each day cultivating hobbies and enjoying their home with an amazing safety net in place.

When the couple first discovered Senior Choice at Home, they wanted to mull over the idea. Choosing to age in place is an investment, and not a decision to be made lightly. The Valentines attended a presentation about the program, where they learned more about the benefits of the program and its structure.

"A presenter at the meeting said, 'It's better to have it and not need it, than to need it and not have it,'" said the Valentines.

In January of 2023, the pair became members of the program and have been thriving in the home they love ever since.

In addition to having the freedom to be in your own home, Senior Choice at Home also offers the freedom to have an abundance of quality time with loved ones. Just recently, the Valentines hosted 23 family members for Thanksgiving in their home.

It also allows you to continue the things you love the most, like being a business owner. While Connie has retired from her career in real estate and mortgages, Michael still remains active in contracting with his son; aging in place has given him the freedom to continue to pursue his passion.

Endless Trips And Travels

The freedom to travel as much as you'd like is an immense benefit of aging in place. Being a member of a program like Senior Choice at Home also provides you with the reassurance that while you're away from home, traveling the globe as so many of our members do, you still have someone on your side.



Connie and Michael Valentine

Traveling hosts a wealth of benefits for older adults, according to Senior Friendship Centers. In fact, even three days of vacation can drastically lower stress levels. It also keeps your body and mind moving, which is important to maintain with age. Planning and exploring keep your mind engaged, which provides mental stimulation that older adults need.

Senior Choice at Home members can spend up to 45 days out of town while being protected under their membership. The Valentines went the extra mile and invested in the policy that lets them travel as long as they want, while knowing that if anything happens while they spend the summer out of state, their care team back in Florida is ready to support them in any way necessary, like serving as their personal advocate and keeping their family updated in emergency situations.

The Right Decision

The Valentines always knew that aging independently was their plan, especially when considering their adult children. Respectful of the lives their children built for themselves, the couple did not want their adult children to have to spend their retirement caring for them. With a care team on their side if they ever need it, the family can spend their time together focused on just that – being together.

Making the best decision for your long-term plan takes time. The decision requires thoughtful planning, detailed conversations, and an understanding of your options. To those who may be considering joining an age-in-place program, the Valentines have a few words of wisdom:

"It definitely took us a little while to make up our minds, but when we did, it was like the end of a sentence," said Connie. "There was a period there, and that was it. We don't regret it."

To learn more about Senior Choice at Home and its benefits, visit SeniorChoiceatHome.com or call (239) 788-0694.

About The Author

John Nicolette, P.T. is the director of Senior Choice at Home, a membership-based life plan at home program for healthy, independent seniors in Lee, Collier and Charlotte counties.

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Cape Coral Art League

Open Painting

Enjoy the company of fellow artists. Just drop by and bring your own art project and supplies. Enjoy some yummy snacks and enjoyable music too! No registration required! (Adults only, please).



Every Wednesday (September through July) from 1 to 4 p.m. Open to the public. \$3 for members, \$6 for nonmembers (Pay at the door).

Student Sundays – Teaching Young People Art (October Through June)

Exposing young people to the visual arts can help in the development of motor skills, language skills, social skills, teamwork, decision-making, risk-taking, and, of course, inventiveness. At the Cape Coral Art League, we strive to teach the next generation about drawing, color, layout, perspective, and balance – skills that can benefit them in their academic work as well as expand their creativity. And they have fun while learning!

Ages 6 to 14 (no younger, please). 1 to 4 p.m. Fee: \$20. All materials provided. Cash or check at the door only. Please arrive 15 minutes early to register – no pre-sign-ups. No reservations required. New lesson every week. Check our Facebook page or our website for updates.

Paint Pouring Class With Pat St. Onge (*See article on Page 10 about Pat St. Onge).

May 7 – 1 to 3 p.m.

May 14 – 1 to 4 p.m.

Concept: Explore fluid art methods for creating beautiful abstract patterns with paint – no brushes involved! Then we’ll discover and paint some surprising creatures we see!

List Of Materials

Disposable cookie trays and several canvases in sizes that fit inside the tray. Suggested sizes: 4x4, 6x6, 8x8, 8x10, 9x12.

- Acrylic paint – several colors plus white (craft paint works fine or artists paint) **Do not use** pre-mixed paint for pouring.
- Floetrol for latex paint (not the oil-based). Available at Home Depot with the paint additives.
- Silicone oil – I have plenty of 3-in-1 oil to share with the class.
- Small plastic cups for mixing paints (snack size or small Dixie plastic cups). Wooden stir sticks and paper towels.

May Shows And Events

Florida Life

May 8 through May 21 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday

Opening reception and presentation of awards on Thursday, May 8 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Member’s Month

May 8 through May 21 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday

Opening reception and presentation of awards on Thursday, May 8 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

May Classes

Beginning Acrylic – Mondays, 10 a.m. to noon

Intermediate Acrylic Painting – Mondays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Learn to Draw – Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon

Creative Watercolor for the Beginner and Above, Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon

Pastel Painting for Beginners – Tuesdays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

The Art of Zentangle – Tuesdays, 1 to 3 p.m.

Oil Painting for All Levels – Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Digital Photography and Graphics

(Adults 16-plus) – Wednesdays, 3 to 5 p.m.

Intermediate and Advanced Pastel

Painting – 9 a.m. to noon

Scan the QR code for the schedule.

Please consult www.capecoralartleague.org for more information.

Cape Coral Art League, 516 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33990, (239) 772-5657, www.capecoralartleague.org.

Create
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

Why Did Toys Disappear From Cereal Boxes?

How Breakfast Got Boring

By Jake Rossen, www.mentalfloss.com

Honey Comb Monster Mitts. Urkel for President campaign buttons. Sugar Smacks Star Trek badges. If you ate cereal between the 1950s and 1990s, you were likely to encounter a cereal box prize – an inexpensive trinket lurking inside the bag that may have made the difference between a kid choosing Fruit Loops over Lucky Charms.

Browse the cereal aisle today, though, and you won’t find much in the way of in-box toy incentives. So what happened?

The Origin Of Cereal Box Toys

Dry breakfast cereal has always been marketing-driven. In the 1930s, Mickey Mouse was recruited to endorse Post products; Cap’n Crunch was created to appeal to kids who hated soggy cereal. But prizes weren’t always relegated to children. In 1905, Quaker Oats awarded consumers free bowls of fine China in exchange for box tokens.

Obviously, Quaker wasn’t stuffing fragile dinnerware into boxes of oatmeal: You had to send away for the bowls. But before long, prizes were included in the package itself. In the 1930s,



Cereal prizes are few and far between. Photo courtesy of Steven Gottlieb, Getty Image

General Mills began enticing kids with paper airplanes and trading cards packed inside cereal boxes. In the 1940s, Army buttons could be dug out of Pep cereal. In the 1950s, Kellogg’s began

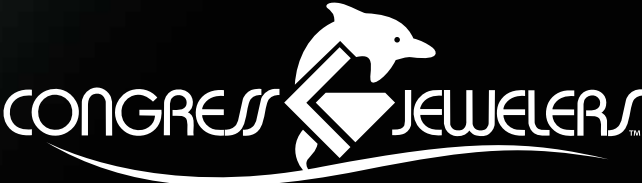
Why Did Toys Disappear on page 13

Mother’s Day is just around the corner.
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Act Fast! Spots Filling Quickly!

Cape Coral Summer Camp Registration Is Open Now!

The City of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department is open for summer camp registration. Parents are encouraged to register early, as spots are expected to fill quickly. Due to high demand, online registration and payment are highly recommended.

2025 Summer Camp Dates: June 16 to Aug. 1.

This year's summer camps offer a diverse range of activities to engage children of all interests, including sports, science, nature, and the arts.

Traditional Summer Camp (Completed Kindergarten To 5th Grade)

Locations: Boca Grande Community Center, Estero Recreation Center, Matlacha/Pine Island Elementary School, North Fort Myers Recreation Center, Olga Community Center, Veterans Park Recreation Center, Wa-Ke Hatchee Recreation Center.

Schedule: June 10 to July 26 (All seven weeks.)
Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (\$85/child per week) (Boca Grande and Matlacha camps run from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
These camps offer a full day of fun, including arts and crafts,

sports, organized games, water activities, and outdoor play. Staff-to-camper ratio is 1-to-15 to ensure a safe environment.

Middle School Camp (6th To 8th Grade)

Locations: Estero Recreation Center, North Fort Myers Recreation Center, Veterans Park Recreation Center, Wa-Ke Hatchee Recreation Center.

Schedule: June 10 to July 26 (All seven weeks.)
Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (\$85/child per week.)
Middle schoolers will enjoy nontraditional activities with weekly themes, featuring both indoor and outdoor experiences tailored to their interests.

Specialty Camps

For campers looking for unique experiences, specialty camps are available in various locations, offering hands-on learning in science, arts, nature, and adventure. Some featured specialty camps include:

- Water Wonders Camp (Ages 12 to 13) – June 16 to 20, Lakes Park.
- Outdoor Explorers Camp (Ages 11 to 13) – June 16 to 20, Lee County Civic Center Complex.

- Colors of Nature Camp (Ages 12 to 13) – June 23 to 27, Lakes Park.
- Eco-Detectives Camp (Ages 8 to 12) – Two sessions: June 23 to 27 and July 14 to 18, Manatee Park.
- S.T.E.A.M. Camp (Ages 8 to 13) – Two sessions: June 30 to July 3, July 14 to 18, Lee County Civic Center Complex.
- Wilderness Explorers (Ages 13 to 16) – July 28 to Aug. 1, Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve.

Special Needs Camps (Ages 6 To 21)

The city also offers Camp Sunshine (ages 6 to 12) and Camp All-Star (ages 13 to 21) at Karl Drews Special Needs Center. These camps cater to children with developmental and physical challenges. Prior assessments and documentation are required before registration.

For more details, visit www.leegov.com/parks/programs/summer or call your desired camp location during business hours. Don't forget to check out the 2025 Summer Camp Guide for a full list of offerings at <https://cld.bz/vWFPewa/4>.

Why Did Toys Disappear from page 12

inserting tiny submarines and scuba-diving frogmen into their products. (The submarines could be filled with baking soda that allowed them to plunge and resurface in bathwater.)

Some companies used the limitations of the giveaways to get creative. In 1955, Quaker Puffed Rice offered a deed that entitled the consumer to a one-inch plot of land in the Yukon; Nabisco's Wheat Honeys promised a launching plastic rocket; Alpha Bits included terrariums where kids could grow basil.

As plastic injection molding made toymaking easier, companies began outsourcing creative toy ideas to marketing companies, who would then try to bid for cereal contracts. The toys had to meet exact specifications for size and weight. The item couldn't have any loose parts, because a tiny figure's broken arm or head could become a choking hazard. (That

problem was never fully resolved: In 1988, Kellogg's recalled 30 million tiny flutes and binoculars that were included in boxes of Corn Pops and Rice Krispies that could break into smaller, airway-obstructing pieces.)

Some toys didn't take much brainstorming: They were marketing tie-ins. A new Star Wars movie could mean a lightsaber spoon stuffed into boxes of Apple Jacks; others were mascot-driven, with Tony the Tiger license plates awaiting kids in boxes of Frosted Flakes.

Come the 2000s, though, cereal toys seemed to be growing scarce.

Cereal companies never made any formal announcements about their shifting marketing strategies. Still, it's easy enough to identify some contributing factors to the decline in cereal toys.

The most significant change to the industry was the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, a

voluntary pledge announced in 2005 that curbs advertising less-nutritious food to kids. Cereal makers like Post, General Mills, and Kellogg's (under the company name Kellanova) are all participants. Since toys are certainly going to catch a kid's eye, there may have been some reluctance to stuff them into sugary cereals. Instead, companies began including pedometers in boxes to encourage physical activity.

A more health-conscious market wasn't the only issue. Environmental concerns were also in play, with companies recognizing that the mass production of plastic items likely to be discarded isn't exactly a public relations win.

Cereal incentives still exist. Tiny toy mascots dubbed Bowl Buddies were included in Kellogg's boxes in 2021. Other boxes feature QR codes so consumers can play games online. But the days of garnering a deed to a one-inch plot of land in the Yukon or firing off a plastic rocket over the breakfast table are likely over.

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Book Review: *Floating Like A Jellyfish* By Sherry Kelly

By Lillian Till,
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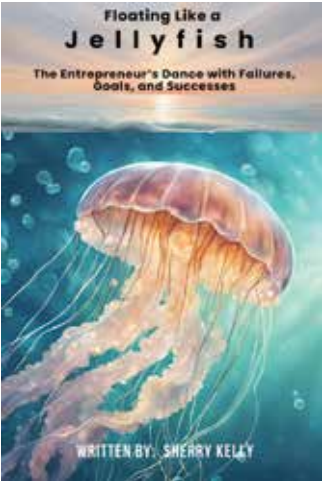
In *Floating Like a Jellyfish: The Entrepreneur's Dance with Goals, Failures, and Successes*, Sherry Kelly takes readers on a candid journey through the unpredictable waters of entrepreneurship. Her memoir is not just about business ventures, but the emotional currents entrepreneurs navigate as they chase ambitions, face setbacks, and redefine success.

Kelly's writing is refreshingly honest. She shares moments of doubt, missteps, and unexpected detours. What sets *Floating Like a Jellyfish* apart is the metaphor that threads through the narrative – likening the entrepreneurial journey to a jellyfish drifting with ocean currents. Kelly challenges the conventional narrative of relentless hustle, instead embracing adaptability and resilience.

The book opens with Kelly recounting her early foray into the business world. From the outset, she acknowledges the weight of expectations and the pressure to “swim against the tide.” Her storytelling is engaging, filled with vivid anecdotes that capture the excitement of new ideas and the sting of failure. Readers will find themselves rooting for her as she weathers each storm, celebrating victories both big and small.

One of the book's greatest strengths lies in its relatability. Kelly's experiences echo the fears and hopes shared by many who dare to venture into the unknown. She deftly balances personal stories with practical insights, offering readers a sense of companionship. Her reflections on failure are particularly poignant; rather than framing setbacks as mere obstacles, she presents them as essential learning moments that shape growth.

The structure of *Floating Like a Jellyfish* mirrors the ebb and flow of the entrepreneurial journey. Each chapter feels like a tide pulling readers deeper into Kelly's world, where



ambition collides with reality and perseverance finds new meaning. The prose is light and engaging, making complex emotions and business challenges feel accessible.

Kelly can infuse humor and warmth into her storytelling. Her wit and honesty shine through in moments of vulnerability, making the narrative feel like a conversation with a wise and empathetic friend. Whether discussing the thrill of launching a new venture or the quiet resilience needed to start over, Kelly's voice remains authentic and inspiring.

Floating Like a Jellyfish is not a traditional guide to entrepreneurship. Readers seeking a step-by-step manual might be surprised to find something far richer: a meditation on what it means to embrace uncertainty and find joy in the journey itself. Instead of prescribing rigid strategies, she invites readers to flow with life's unpredictability and discover their rhythm.

Ultimately, *Floating Like a Jellyfish* is a celebration of persistence, vulnerability, and embracing the unknown. Sherry offers a heartfelt reminder that success is rarely linear and that sometimes, the best path forward is to surrender to the currents and trust in one's ability to adapt. For anyone embarking on their entrepreneurial dance, this book is a beacon of encouragement and wisdom.

Join us on April 26, at 1 p.m. for an inspiring afternoon with author Sherry Kelly as she signs copies of her book.

Lillian Till has been a dedicated nurse in our community for 30 years. Married for 35 years, she is the proud parent of two children and a grandparent to three. Lillian is often found at Flutterbuy Books and More, which she is proud to own. Opening a bookstore of her own has always been a dream, one she continues to nurture with every turn of the page.

Wintrust Banking Center Now Open In Cape Coral

Wintrust Banking Center has opened a new branch in Cape Coral, located at 915 Cape Coral Pkwy., E. and is now ready to serve the community with personalized banking solutions.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

New Branch: Wintrust Banking Center officially opened its doors in Cape Coral.

Location: The new branch is located at 915 Cape Coral Pkwy., E.

Services: The bank offers personalized banking solutions and is committed to serving the community.

Contact: You can reach them at (239) 800-6720.

Wintrust's Approach: Wintrust Banking Center aims to be both big enough to serve and small enough to know its customers, offering personalized services.

Community Focus: Wintrust Banking Center emphasizes its commitment and appreciation for Cape Coral and its customers.



Wintrust Relationship Banker Officer Yenet Cruz and Branch Manager VP Alex Cortez prepare shovels for last month's tree planting ceremony.



Members of the Naples Botanical Garden during the planting ceremony



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Pickleball Boom: Cape Coral’s First Major Tournament Makes History

Cape Coral made its mark in the world of pickleball as top players from around the globe brought their talents to the city for its first-ever major tournament. The Carvana PPA Tour Veolia Cape Coral Open welcomed pickleball enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels, giving them a chance to compete alongside the sport’s biggest stars.

Held from March 5 to 9 at the Lake Kennedy Racquet Center, the tournament provided an unforgettable experience for both professional and amateur players.

Record-Breaking Success And Economic Impact

Cape Coral’s inaugural Professional Pickleball Association (PPA) tournament shattered expectations, setting a new benchmark for first-time PPA venues. The event drew over 4,400 spectators – 30 percent more than any previous debut event. The tournament also generated approximately \$70,000 in concession revenue, an impressive feat considering the facility’s relatively small concession stand.

“The overwhelming attendance and positive reception confirm that Cape Coral is quickly becoming a top destination for professional pickleball,” said Parks & Recreation Director Joe Petrella. “We are thrilled with the success of this tournament and look forward to hosting more high-caliber events in the future.”

The event also delivered thrilling competition, highlighted by the rise of 16-year-old phenom John Goins and another Triple Crown victory for Anna Leigh Waters. Media coverage praised the tournament, with one article calling Cape Coral’s event a “home run for the PPA Tour,” citing the large and enthusiastic crowds.

High-Profile Competition And Community Impact

“The entire staff at Lake Kennedy was excited for this event,” said Jason Smith, director of operations at Lake Kennedy Racquet Center. “We worked tirelessly to ensure everything ran smoothly. This tournament put Cape Coral on the map for pickleball.”

With more than 500 players registered, amateur competitors seized the opportunity to showcase their skills against the world’s best. Organizers emphasized that this was a unique chance for amateur players to compete alongside



professionals and test their abilities on a big stage.

As with each PPA Tour stop, the Veolia Cape Coral Open provided a platform for amateur players to shine. The PPA Tour’s slogan, “Play where the pros play,” reflected its mission to create an inclusive environment where all players could experience the excitement of professional-level competition.

“A debut tournament is always exciting, especially at such an incredible facility as the Lake Kennedy Racquet Center,” said Connor Pardoe, founder and CEO of the PPA Tour. “Cape Coral has a deep passion for pickleball, and we were thrilled to bring the best players in the world to their doorstep. For local amateur players, this was a golden opportunity to test their skills and compete with the best.”

The pro division of the Veolia Cape Coral Open featured some of the biggest names in pickleball, including World No. 1 players Anna Leigh Waters, Ben Johns, and Argentine standout Federico Staksrud. Former tennis stars Genie Bouchard and Jack Sock also participated, adding even more excitement to the event.

“This was the first professional tournament not only in Cape Coral but for our racquet center,” Smith said.

Former Lake Kennedy General Manager Tom Stegemen and the PPA Tour worked together to make this event a reality. The team at Sports Facilities Companies, alongside incoming General Manager Lisa Zuk, played a key role in bringing high-caliber tournaments to Cape Coral.

The Lake Kennedy Racquet Center, which opened on Aug. 28 last year and is slated for a name rebranding, boasts 32 pickleball courts and 12 tennis courts. Smith emphasized that hosting major tournaments like the Carvana PPA Tour Veolia Cape Coral Open aligned perfectly with the center’s design and purpose.

“This sport is growing at an unprecedented rate,” Smith said. “Cape Coral built these courts with professional tournaments in mind, making it an ideal venue for an event of this scale. There are very few facilities in the country that can match what we have here.”

The influx of players and spectators also provided a significant boost to local businesses.

“This was huge for the city,” Smith added. “With more events like this, we’ll continue to see economic benefits from the many participants and fans coming in.”

Additional Events And Future Plans

In addition to the tournament, players of all skill levels had the opportunity to participate in PPA Tour Pickleball Camps. Led by professional PPA players, these camps offered structured skill development for those looking to elevate their game.

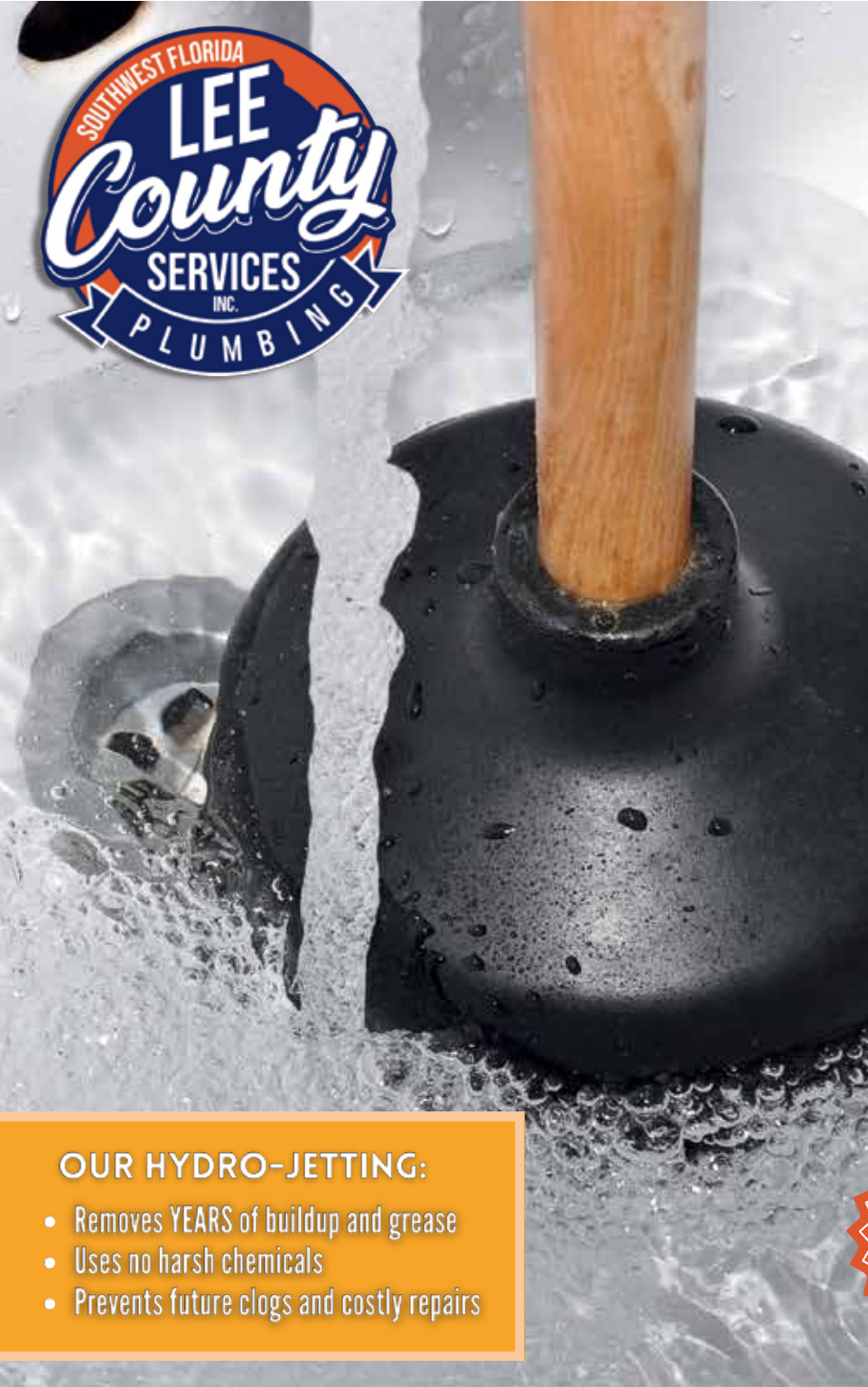

The event also included participation from the Junior PPA, which is dedicated to fostering young pickleball talent through competition, development programs, and social engagement. The Junior PPA provided a platform for youth athletes to showcase their skills and compete against top juniors from around the world.

Looking ahead, the Lake Kennedy Racquet Center aims to continue hosting high-profile tournaments in both pickleball and tennis.

“We want to bring the best players in the world to Cape Coral,” Smith said. “The PPA made that happen, and we’re excited for the future.”

For more information, visit www.ppatour.com/tournament/florida-open.

Lake Kennedy Racquet Center is located at 420 SW 2nd Ave., Cape Coral, FL.



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Unlocking Wellness With Thrive By K

Harnessing The Power Of Evexias Hormone Pellets

By Kristin Gustin, APRN/Owner

In today’s fast-paced world, achieving optimal health and wellness is no longer just a goal – it’s a necessity. Thrive by K understands this imperative and is committed to delivering advanced health solutions that truly make a difference. Central to its approach is the use of Evexias hormone pellets, a groundbreaking option in the field of hormone replacement therapy (HRT).



Samantha “Sammy” Holt and Kristin Gustin

A New Era Of Hormone Health

Hormones are the body’s chemical messengers that regulate numerous critical functions, including metabolism, mood, and reproductive health. Unfortunately, it’s common for hormone levels to decline or become imbalanced as we age or encounter certain health conditions, leading to a host of symptoms such as fatigue, weight fluctuation, mood swings, and more. Fortunately, Thrive by K is pioneering a holistic approach to hormone balance with Evexias hormone pellets.

The Science Behind Evexias Hormone Pellets At Thrive By K

At the core of Thrive by K’s treatment philosophy is the belief that personalized care is essential for effective hormone therapy. Evexias hormone pellets are designed to deliver customized solutions that align with this belief:

- 1. Personalization:** By working closely with medical professionals at Thrive by K, patients receive tailored treatment plans. Each Evexias pellet is custom-compounded to meet the unique hormonal needs of the individual, ensuring precise dosing and efficacy.
- 2. Biocompatibility:** One significant advantage of Evexias pellets is that they use bioidentical hormones, which are chemically identical to the ones our bodies naturally produce. This reduces the risk of adverse effects and maximizes compatibility and safety.
- 3. Sustained Release:** Unlike traditional hormone therapies, which can lead to erratic hormone levels, Evexias pellets provide a continuous release of hormones, promoting stability and balance. This steady delivery mimics natural hormone patterns and minimizes the roller-coaster effects associated with other treatments.
- 4. Convenience and Comfort:** Once inserted, the pellets require no ongoing maintenance. By eliminating the need for daily pills, patches, or creams, they offer unmatched convenience and allow patients to focus on living their lives to the fullest.

Thrive By K: Beyond Hormone Therapy

Beyond the transformative power of hormone pellets, Thrive by K embraces a comprehensive approach to health. The clinic emphasizes lifestyle modifications, nutritional guidance, and stress management to enhance treatment outcomes, recognizing that true wellness stems from a holistic perspective.

Transforming Lives, One Pellet At A Time

Patients who have undergone treatment with Thrive by K frequently report a dramatic improvement in their quality of life. With balanced hormone levels, many experience renewed vitality, improved mental focus, enhanced mood stability, and enriched personal relationships.

Here is one of many happy patient reviews.

I am a 49-year-old male and I found Thrive By K after finally getting a diagnosis of hypogonadism known as Low T. For three years I went to my GP and it was the same story every year of 30% BMI, elevated lipids, blood pressure and being pre-diabetic. I tried countless times to cut weight and found myself only getting back to what it was the previous year. Finally asked my GP to check my T. and the response I got was “I can think of 10 other things to check for but sure,” and there it was, low T.

I realized that my GP care was going to create slow play, so I made the decision to take it out of network, researched my options, and did I get lucky finding Thrive By K.

I had an appointment within days, showed up quite disheveled with life stressors and some fear of what’s to come. I was greeted with kindness and encouragement that things don’t need to be this way and we will get you better.

So fast, literally that day, I had labs drawn at the office and a week later had pellets inserted after we reviewed results. Just

like that, it was that easy! Beyond that they even helped me with stop byes to answer questions when I was in doubt. Of course, typically cautious I came to realize that the baseline testing they did was really comprehensive putting my mind at ease.

I feel amazing and have never been so excited to go to Thrive By K. It’s been 10 weeks and with the help of a small stack of a peptide I have lost 23 pounds. Even people I run into are in wow by the new me. Totally back in the game and life is back on. What a fantastic experience, best ever!

~ Bryan Fugere

False Contraindications – Myths Or Misconceptions

When discussing medical treatments such as bioidentical hormone pellets, it’s essential to rely on accurate and evidence-based information. That said, it can be helpful to address misunderstandings or misconceptions surrounding the use of such treatments. Here are some common false contraindications—myths or misconceptions—that might surround bioidentical hormone pellets:

- 1. They Cause Cancer:** One prevalent misconception is that all hormone replacement therapies, including bioidentical hormones, universally increase cancer risk. In reality, the relationship between hormone therapy and cancer is complex and varies depending on individual health factors, the type of hormones used, dosing, and monitoring. Bioidentical hormones can in fact decrease risk of cancer.
- 2. Suitable Only For Women:** While hormone therapy is often associated with treating menopausal symptoms in women, bioidentical hormone pellets can also be highly beneficial for men, addressing issues like low testosterone and its associated symptoms.
- 3. They Cause Weight Gain:** Some believe that hormone pellets lead to inevitable weight gain. However, when prescribed and monitored correctly, these hormones can help regulate metabolism and, for some individuals, assist in maintaining a healthy weight.
- 4. They Are Not Safe:** Due to a lack of understanding, there is sometimes a belief that bioidentical hormones are unsafe or unregulated. However, when prescribed by a qualified healthcare professional, compounded bioidentical hormones can be a safe option, and many providers choose FDA-approved hormone options when possible.
- 5. One-Size-Fits-All Dosing:** A misconception exists that

hormone pellets offer the same dose for everyone. In reality, hormone pellet therapy is highly individualized. Healthcare providers conduct thorough evaluations, including blood work, to tailor the dosing to each patient’s unique hormonal needs correctly.

6. Immediate Results: Some expect immediate results with hormone pellet therapy, which can lead to early disappointment. In truth, it can take some time for the body to adapt to the therapy, and patients need to give it time for optimal effects to become apparent.

7. No Need For Follow-Up: Thinking that no follow-up is required after getting hormone pellets is a misconception. Routine monitoring is necessary to ensure hormone levels stay balanced and adjustments are made as needed.

It’s important to approach such therapies under the guidance of a qualified healthcare provider who can offer personalized advice. As always, those considering hormone therapy of any kind should have an in-depth discussion with their healthcare practitioners to explore the benefits and risks based on their specific health profile and needs.

The Path Forward

Thrive by K, with its integration of Evexias hormone pellets, stands at the forefront of hormone health innovation. By providing tailored, effective, and convenient solutions for hormone imbalances, the clinic empowers individuals to reclaim their vitality and confidence.

For those seeking to enrich their wellbeing amidst the complexities of modern life, Thrive by K offers a promising path—one that blends science with compassion and commitment. As they continue to evolve and adopt cutting-edge solutions like Evexias hormone pellets, they remain dedicated to transforming health narratives, one patient at a time.

Thrive by K, 4636 SE 9th Place, Suite A, Cape Coral, FL 33904, (239) 984-6707, www.thrivebyk.com.

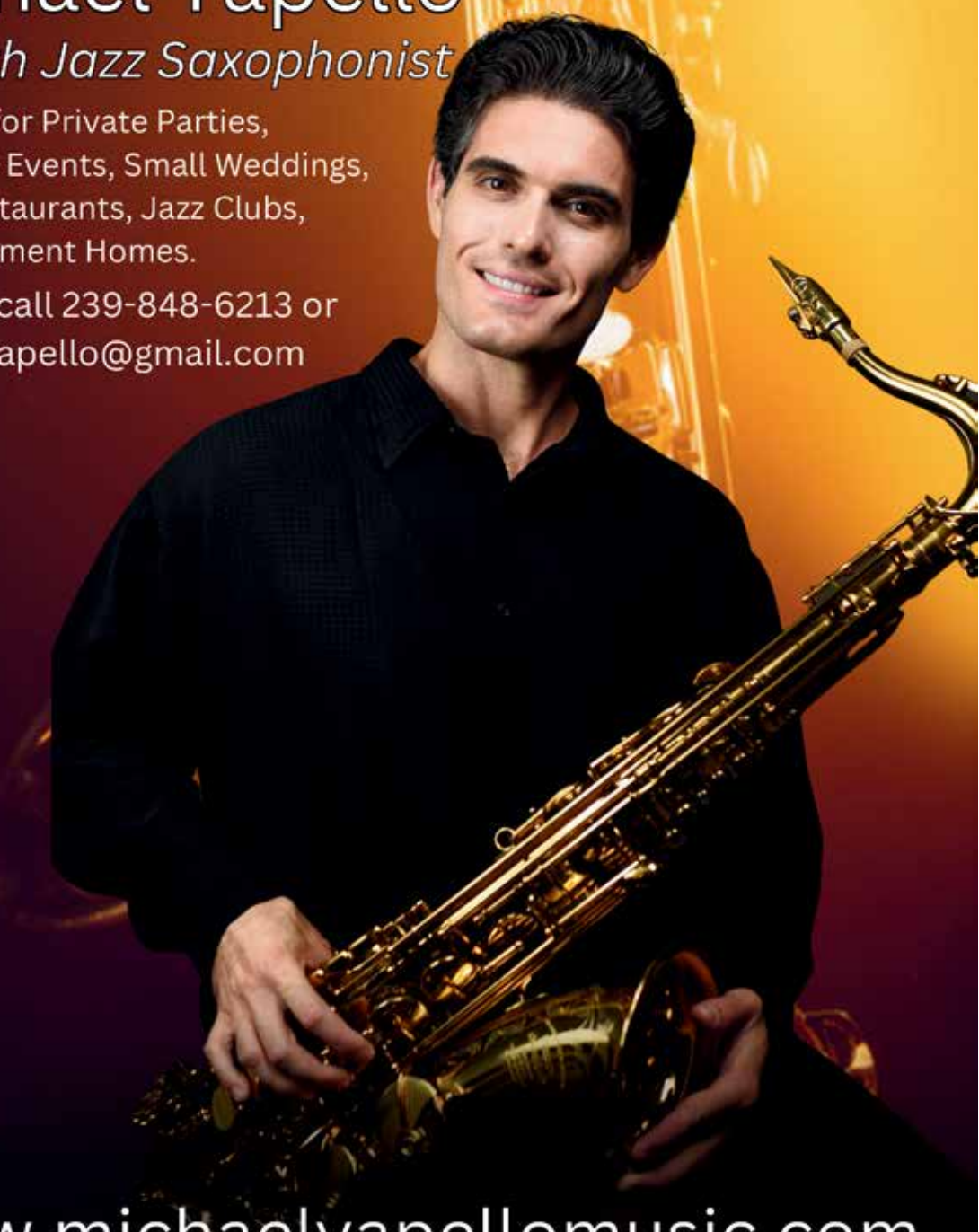


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Roman Roofing: A Workplace Built On Excellence And Team Spirit

At Roman Roofing Inc., the foundation of success isn't just in the roofs they build but in the people who build the company. Known for their outstanding roofing services, Roman Roofing is equally celebrated as a premier workplace, where employees are valued, supported, and motivated to excel.

The company's Customer Care Team exemplifies this ethos. A special shout out goes to Marina Garcia, Erica Masser, Ashley Lehmann and Keven "The Bull" Turnbull. This dynamic group of professionals is one of the driving forces behind Roman Roofing's customer-centric approach. As the first point of contact for many clients, the Internal Sales Team combines expert knowledge with genuine care to



guide homeowners and businesses through the roofing process seamlessly.

Roman Roofing fosters a culture of collaboration and innovation. Team members are provided with ongoing professional development opportunities to stay ahead in an ever-evolving industry. Regular training sessions, and team-

building events cultivate a workplace where employees feel confident and inspired.

The company's commitment to its people extends beyond professional development. Roman Roofing is renowned for its employee-centric policies, offering competitive compensation, comprehensive benefits, and a positive work-life balance. The leadership team prioritizes open communication, ensuring every voice is heard and valued.

"Our Customer Care Team is the heartbeat of our organization. They play a critical role in delivering the outstanding service Roman Roofing is known for," says Jayson Rogers, Sales Manager. "Their dedication, expertise, and teamwork are what set us apart in the industry."

At Roman Roofing, employees aren't just part of a company – they're part of a family. It's a place where careers are built, talents are nurtured, and contributions are celebrated. Interested in joining a workplace that truly stands out? Roman Roofing is the place to be.

Roman Roofing, 921 NE 27th Ln, Cape Coral, FL 33909, www.romanroofing.com, (239) 458-7663.

Cape Coral Animal Shelter Strongly Supports Trooper's Law

At Cape Coral Animal Shelter (CCAS), we believe that animals deserve protection, compassion, and responsible guardianship – especially during emergencies. That's why we strongly support Trooper's Law (HB 205), a crucial piece of legislation that would make it a third-degree felony to abandon a restrained dog outside during a natural disaster.



Inspired by Trooper, a Bull Terrier left tied to a pole in rising floodwater during Hurricane Milton evacuations, this law is a vital step in preventing cruelty and holding negligent owners accountable. Trooper was found terrified and growling in belly-high water along Interstate 75 by Florida Highway Patrol troopers. His former owner was later arrested and charged with aggravated animal cruelty. Now, Florida lawmakers have taken action to ensure that no other dog suffers the way Trooper did.

Trooper's Law unanimously passed the Florida Senate (39-0), but it still needs support in the Florida House of Representatives to become law. We urge the public to take action! Call or email your local Florida State Representative and tell them to support HB 205 Trooper's Law.

"Protecting those who have no voice has always been my passion, which is why I founded the Cape Coral Animal Shelter over five years ago," said JoAnn Elardo, founder and president of the board of directors. "Taking the lead in legislative matters is an important part of our mission, and we have done so since getting legislation passed prohibiting the retail sale of dogs and cats in Cape Coral in 2019."

At CCAS, we stand as leaders in animal welfare and will continue advocating for stronger protection for the animals in our community. Stay tuned for more updates on state and local legislation that we support. Let's make sure no pet is ever left behind in a storm again!

About The Cape Coral Animal Shelter

The Cape Coral Animal Shelter and Veterinary Clinic is a nonprofit organization that has been serving South Florida since 2020. In just under five years, CCAS has found loving, forever homes for over 5,000 abandoned, unwanted, and neglected pets. Through its full service, state-of-the-art veterinary clinic, CCAS has provided low-cost veterinary care to over 7,000 clients in our community and beyond. A major expansion is planned for 2025 that will more than triple the current shelter space and expand clinic operations to serve more people and their pets.

The mission of the Cape Coral Animal Shelter is to engage a special bond between people and animals by means of adoption services, medical care, education, and training for the prevention of cruelty and abandonment. We provide a safe place where animals will remain in our care until they are placed in qualified, forever homes.

Cape Coral Animal Shelter, 325 SW 2nd Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33991, (239) 573-2002, www.capecoralanimalshelter.com.



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Real Estate Corner

What's Next For Cape Coral Real Estate?

Key Trends Shaping The Market

By Kirstin Moll

As we move into April, Cape Coral's real estate market is showing signs of change. After a few dynamic years marked by record-breaking sales, fluctuating mortgage rates, and shifting inventory levels, buyers and sellers alike are wondering: what's next?



While Cape Coral remains a highly desirable destination for homebuyers – both full-time residents and seasonal investors – understanding current trends is essential for making informed real estate decisions. Let's take a closer look at the factors shaping the local market this spring.

Inventory Levels: A Shift Toward Balance?

One of the most notable trends in Cape Coral is the increase in housing inventory. After years of tight supply, more homes are hitting the market, giving buyers more options and easing some of the intense competition seen in recent years. Right now, we have about a year's worth of inventory. This means that if no one listed another home, it would take a year to sell them all. There doesn't seem to be any slowdown either as we've seen a rise in single family home permits being issued for new construction. We have the most inventory we've seen in 13 years.

For sellers, this means pricing strategically is more important than ever. Gone are the days of listing at any price and expecting a bidding war. Instead, sellers should work with experienced real estate professionals to set competitive asking prices and ensure their homes stand out in a crowded marketplace. This also means seeking out realtors with creative marketing strategies. It will take more to get a home sold in this climate.

Mortgage Rates And Buyer Behavior

Interest rates have been a hot topic over the past year, with fluctuations impacting affordability and overall demand. While mortgage rates remain higher than the historic lows seen in 2020 and 2021, they have stabilized in recent months, giving buyers more confidence to enter the market.

For buyers, this means it's essential to get pre-approved and understand what mortgage rate you qualify for. Locking in a rate early can help you budget effectively and avoid potential increases.

Home Prices: Holding Steady Or Dropping?

Cape Coral came in second for the most price decreases only slightly behind Punta Gorda. Home values in Cape Coral have remained relatively stable despite economic uncertainties. Prices have cooled from the peak of the pandemic-driven housing boom, but they are still strong compared to pre-2020 levels. According to recent data, median home prices have dropped 2.6 percent in the area but seem to be remaining relatively steady, with only slight variations depending on location and property type.

Certain factors, such as increasing insurance costs and flood zone considerations, may impact pricing trends.

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Waterfront properties, a hallmark of Cape Coral's real estate appeal, continue to command premium prices, but buyers are becoming more discerning, prioritizing homes with updated features and modern hurricane-resistant construction.

The Role Of New Construction

Cape Coral's rapid growth has led to an influx of new construction homes, particularly in developing areas. Builders are working to meet demand by offering a variety of floor plans and price points, attracting both first-time buyers and those looking for upgraded features in newer homes.

For buyers considering new construction, it's crucial to understand timelines and potential delays. Additionally, comparing builder incentives and financing options can lead to significant savings. On the resale side, existing homeowners should be aware that competition from new homes may impact their ability to sell quickly, particularly if their home lacks modern updates or energy-efficient features.

Investor Activity And Rental Market Trends

Cape Coral has long been a popular market for investors looking to purchase rental properties. The short-term rental market, in particular, has seen continued demand due to the city's appeal as a vacation destination. However, local regulations and community restrictions on short-term rentals are evolving, so investors should stay informed to ensure compliance.

For long-term rentals, demand remains high, especially as some buyers wait out mortgage rate fluctuations. Rental prices have remained strong, though they are not increasing at the rapid pace seen in previous years. This creates opportunities for investors while also providing more options for renters who aren't ready to buy.

Looking Ahead: What To Expect For The Rest of 2025

As we move further into 2025, several key factors will continue to shape Cape Coral's real estate market:

- **Mortgage Rate Trends:** Any shifts in interest rates will impact buyer affordability and overall demand.
- **Economic Conditions:** Employment rates, inflation, and consumer confidence will all play a role in shaping housing trends.
- **Insurance And Flood Zone Considerations:** Rising insurance costs and flood zone designations may influence buyer decisions and pricing strategies.
- **Population Growth:** Florida remains a top relocation destination, and Cape Coral's appeal as a waterfront community will keep demand steady.

Final Thoughts

Whether you're buying, selling, or investing in Cape Coral, staying informed about the latest market trends is crucial. While the market is shifting from the intense frenzy of previous years, it remains a strong and attractive place for real estate transactions.

For buyers, now is a great time to explore options and take advantage of increased inventory. For sellers, proper pricing and presentation will be key to securing top dollar in a competitive landscape. And for investors, keeping an eye on regulatory changes and rental demand can help maximize returns.

If you're considering making a move in Cape Coral, working with a knowledgeable local real estate professional can help you navigate the market with confidence. The rest of 2025 promises to be an exciting year, and staying ahead of these trends will ensure success in any real estate endeavor.

And before you go: here are the stats on the real estate market in Cape Coral this month:

Median Sold price: \$389,438 (\$230/square feet).

Down 2.6% from last year.

Number of homes for sale: 5,498.

Up 10.6% month over month.

Number of homes sold: 357.

Up 8.5% month over month.

268 Homes were sold under asking.

66 Homes were sold at asking.

23 Homes were sold over asking.

Average days on market: 83 days.

Up 16.7% change year over year.

Until next month, Kirstin Moll

Kirstin made the move from Missouri to the sunny shores of Southwest Florida in 2015 and has been proud to call it home ever since. Before stepping into the world of real estate, she honed her skills as a marketing director for a real estate company and then moved on to be a creative director, designing campaigns for some of the top companies in the country. Kirstin's background in marketing and design gives her a unique edge in showcasing properties in their best light. Kirstin is passionate about providing a full-service luxury experience for every client, whether buying or selling. From the initial consultation to closing, she ensures that every detail is meticulously handled, delivering a seamless and elevated process tailored to meet each client's needs. Please contact Kirstin at (573) 450-3181 or email with any questions to realestate@kirstinmoll.com.

To Shine in the Cape Be Seen in the Sun!

Get your business seen by advertising in this FREE monthly newspaper that is distributed in high traffic locations throughout Cape Coral. The Cape Coral Sun celebrates the past, present and future of Cape Coral through authentic content from The Cape Coral Chamber, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Cape Coral Museum of History, local residents and more!

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For more information contact:

Bonnie Yapello | 239-464-3731
Bonniey.ccsun@gmail.com

Joe Yapello | 239-770-8284
Publisher.ccsun@gmail.com

Coming Up In The Cape

Afternoon Tea Party At Lake Kennedy Center Thursday, April 17 – 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

You are cordially invited to afternoon tea at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., on Thursday, April 17, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Join us for a special afternoon with sandwiches, scones and more! Don't forget your gloves and hat!

The cost is just \$12 per person, and advanced registration is required at (239) 574-0575.

Spring Native Plant Sale At Rotary Park Saturday, April 19 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Join us for the Spring Native Plant Sale at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road on Saturday, April 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Shop from a variety of native trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses, butterfly plants, and tropical edible plants, too. Plant experts will be on hand to answer questions and help you choose the right plant for the right place. Come early for the best selection.

For more information, call Rotary Park, (239) 549-4606. This event is held in conjunction with the rain barrel workshop.

Rain Barrel Workshop At Rotary Park Saturday, April 19 – 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Rain barrels are a great way to reduce stormwater runoff and save water for a dry spell.

Join us for a Rain Barrel Workshop at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road on Saturday, April 19, from 10 to 11 a.m.

In this workshop led by Lee County Master Gardeners, you will learn how to make and install a rain barrel to use at home. The class fee of \$50 includes a pre-assembled rain barrel and is held on the same day as the native plant sale.

Advance registration and payment are required as a limited number of barrels are available.

Easter Sunrise Service At Cape Coral Yacht Club Sunday, April 20 – 7 to 8 a.m.

First Cape Church will host an Easter Sunrise Service at the Cape Coral Yacht Club, 5817 Driftwood Pkwy., on Sunday, April 20 from 7 to 8 a.m.

For more information, call (239) 542-3703.

Mid-Week Bingo At Lake Kennedy Center Thursday, April 24 – 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Take a mid-week break with an afternoon of Bingo at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., on Thursday, April 24 from 12:30 to 2 p.m. Doors open at 12:15 p.m.

The cost is \$12 for 10 rounds of bingo and a snack. Extra cards are available for \$10 each. BYOB and food.

For more information and to reserve your spot, call Lake Kennedy Center at (239) 574-0575.

13th Annual Head And Neck Run/Walk At Rotary Park Saturday, April 26 – 7 to 10:30 a.m.

Join us in a race against head and neck cancer!

This in-person 5K run/walk, 10K run/walk and two-mile walk begins and ends Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road. Race starts at 8 a.m.

Participants also have the option to participate virtually in the 5K run/walk, 10K run/walk or two-mile walk.

Head and neck cancer is diagnosed in more than 68,000 people in the United States yearly. Head and neck cancer is preventable. Head and neck cancer is treatable. All funds raised will be used locally to provide financial assistance to head and neck cancer patients in need and to conduct head and neck cancer screenings in Southwest Florida.

Please visit <https://yourpartnersincare.org/event/2025-annual-head-neck-10k-and-5k-run-2-mile-walk-cape-coral-fl/> for all information.

Partners in Care is the presenter of the Head and Neck 5K series. Partners in Care's mission is to provide cancer education to patients, physicians, and the public, to support cancer research, and to provide financial assistance to cancer patients in need.

Mother/Son Night Of Fun At Lake Kennedy Center Saturday, April 26 – 5 to 8 p.m.

Mothers and their sons can enjoy music, dancing, door prizes, hot and cold appetizers, refreshments and even a special photo by a professional photographer to capture the moment.

This enchanting evening for boys and moms will be held on Saturday, April 26, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Lake Kennedy Center, 400 Santa Barbara Blvd.

Limited tickets are available, and pre-registration is required through Four Freedoms Park at (239) 574-0804.

Free Wildlife Program At Rotary Park Wednesday, April 30 – 1 to 2 p.m.

Join us for a fun, free program at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road, on Wednesday, April 30, from 1 to 2 p.m. This month's topic is "Living with Wildlife."

For more information, call (239) 549-4606.

Earth Day Celebration At Four Freedoms Park Saturday, May 3 – 2 to 8 p.m.

Join an Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, May 3, from 2 to 8 p.m. at Four Freedoms Park, 4818 Tarpon Ct. Admission is free!

For details, call (239) 574-0804.

Mother's Day Celebration In Club Square Sunday, May 11 – 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Cape Vineyard Community Church will host a Mother's Day Celebration in Club Square (behind the building) on Sunday, May 11, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

For more information, contact (239) 645-1980.

Easter Bunny Express 2025

Hop aboard the Easter Bunny Express for a fun-filled holiday adventure at the Railroad Museum of South Florida, located in Lakes Park, 7330 Gladiolus Dr.,

Dates: April 18 (Good Friday), 19, 20 (Easter Sunday), and 21 (Easter Monday) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission: \$5 per rider (ages 6 and up). Free for children ages 1 to 5.

Please note: Infants under one, pregnant mothers, and individuals over 250 pounds cannot ride.

Meet The Easter Bunny!

The Easter Bunny will make a special appearance on Friday and Saturday (April 18 and 19) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Don't miss the chance for photos and fun!

Parking

\$1 for the first hour

\$5 for all-day parking

Gather your family and celebrate Easter with a delightful train ride at the Railroad Museum of South Florida!



Cape Coral Social Club

Friends, Fun, Community

The Cape Coral Social Club provides members with the opportunity to make new friends while enjoying the camaraderie of current friendships in a warm and congenial atmosphere. Members are encouraged to have fun and participate in the club's various offerings that include monthly general meetings featuring informative and entertaining speakers and monthly dinner dances with great food, music and dancing. We also offer organized day trips, cruises, games, boating and much, much more.

To find out more about the Cape Coral Social Club you can attend our monthly meetings as a guest. Monthly meetings are held every fourth Thursday of the month at the German American Social Club (we rent space there). Sign in and light refreshments start at 9:30 a.m. and the general meeting with the guest speaker starting at 10 a.m. The address is 2101 SW Pine Island Road, Cape Coral, FL 33991.

Why Join Us

- Enjoyment for everyone
- Organized trips, tours, cruises, dining and much more.
- Informative and relevant guest speakers
- Monthly dinner dances
- Have fun
- Make new friends
- Community involvement

Who Can Join

- Anyone from Cape Coral and surrounding areas
- No residence requirements
- All are welcome, visitors and residents (and snowbirds!)

Community

- The Cape Coral Social Club (CCSC) serves the community by supporting many local charities such as:
- The Cape Coral Caring Center
- Do the Right Thing
- Cape Coral for the Children Charity
- Cape Coral Animal Shelter

May Dinner Dance

Cape Coral residents and visitors are invited to an evening of dining, dancing, and live entertainment at the May Dinner Dance, hosted by the Cape Coral Social Club. The event will take place on Saturday, May 3, at 5:30 p.m. and is open to the public.

Attendees will have the option to choose from three delicious meal selections while enjoying live music by Jay Smith. Whether you're a seasoned dancer or just looking for a fun night out, this event promises an enjoyable experience for all.

Tickets are priced at \$35 for members and \$40 for guests when paying by cash or check. Credit card payments are also accepted at an adjusted rate of \$38 for members and \$43 for guests. Tickets can be purchased at Lake Kennedy Center, Farmer Joe's, Family Hardware on SE 47th Terrace, or online at www.capecoralsocialclub.org or by calling Judy, (239)-699-0123.

Don't miss this fantastic evening of food, music, and camaraderie!

USA Dance Cape Coral Brings The Joy of Dance This April!

Cape Coral dance lovers, get ready to step, spin, and sway this April! USA Dance, Inc. Chapter #6123 is bringing you exciting opportunities to embrace the rhythm, refine your moves, and celebrate the joy of dance.



Thursday Ballroom Dance Classes – Foxtrot Fun All Month Long!

USA Dance Cape Coral is excited to welcome a new ballroom instructor, Leigh Ann Lawson, who will be leading Foxtrot classes throughout April. Whether you're a beginner eager to learn or an experienced dancer looking to polish your technique, these classes offer a fun and engaging way to master this timeless ballroom favorite.

Where: Four Freedoms Park Community Center, 4818 Tarpon Court, Cape Coral

When: Every Thursday in April

7 p.m. – Doors open and practice session

7:30 to 8:30 p.m. – Dance class

8:30 to 9 p.m. – Practice time

Cost: \$10 per session – the best deal in town!

Don't miss out – USA Dance #6123 will be on summer break from May through August but will return in the fall with an exciting lineup of new dance styles!

Join The Fun

Our events provide a fantastic way to connect with fellow dancers, sharpen your skills, and enjoy the vibrant dance community of Cape Coral. Whether you prefer structured ballroom lessons or just want to hit the dance floor for a lively evening, USA Dance Cape Coral Chapter #6123 has something for everyone!

For more information, contact Carol Davis, President, at (239) 565-7947. See you on the dance floor!



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From The Desk Of Sheriff Carmine Marceno

Never-Ending Toll Scams

They seemingly arrive daily. “You have unpaid tolls.”

Many of us are now aware of this fraudulent message but have questions regarding the content.

We presented some questions to Joshua Hanchey, Senior Technology Specialist at the Lee County Sheriff’s Office.



Question: “Is merely visiting the listed web site damaging in any way?”

Answer: “If you visit a suspicious website (especially one that looks like spam, phishing, or appears to be a scam), it could potentially harm your device, steal your data, or trick you into giving personal information. Simply visiting the site might not be damaging in itself, but if the site is malicious, it could try to install malware, use browser vulnerabilities, or redirect you to other harmful sites. **Best Practice:** Avoid



visiting suspicious sites. If you accidentally visit one, close the page immediately, and run a security scan on your device.”

Question: “This particular message asks you to reply with a “Y” and then to open the link. What do we need to know?”

Answer: “If you’re asked to reply with “Y” or any similar response to a message, it’s often a sign of a scam, phishing attempt, or a fraud. Replying to such messages can confirm to the sender that your number is valid and may lead to more spam or malicious attempts. **Best Practice:** Don’t reply to unsolicited messages, especially if you didn’t expect them. If in doubt, ignore the message.”

Question: “Is it best to block the caller? “Report Junk” and delete? Both?”

Answer: “Blocking the caller is a good immediate response

to stop any further communication. Many phones and messaging apps (like iMessage, for example) allow you to block and report junk. **Best Practice:** Block the number or contact and report it as junk or spam. This helps your phone or app provider prevent further unwanted communications from that number. Deleting the message also clears it from your inbox but does not stop the caller from trying again.”

Responding to these message have the potential to reveal personal information, compromise your accounts and/or expose sensitive data, provide validation of your text number (or email address) and may result in the installation of malware.

When uncertain as to the validity of a received message, search for the agency’s contact information using the internet and directly contact them to verify the validity of the message.





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Ribbon Cuttings



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Huey Magoo's, Restaurant, 1511 NE Pine Island Rd., Cape Coral, FL 33909, www.hueymagoos.com, (239) 529-7820.



DYB Fashion Boutique, Boutique, 4825 Coronado Pkwy., Suite 1, Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.dybfashionboutique.com, (239) 834-2600.



Powers & Rogers, PLLC, Attorney, 615 Cape Coral Pkwy., W., Suite 206, Cape Coral, FL 33914-6572, www.capecorallawfirm.com, (239) 402-5955.



Captains' Express Car Wash, Car Wash, 4613 Chiquita Blvd., S., Cape Coral, Florida 33914, www.captainscarwash.com, (239) 471-4709.



Experience Health & Wellness Center, Chiropractic, 2307 Sandoval Blvd., Unit 3, Cape Coral, FL 33991, <http://efchealth.com>, (239) 205-3700.



Lake Michigan Credit Union of Florida, Banks, 530 Cape Coral Pkwy. E., Cape Coral, FL 33904, www.lmcu.org, (239) 314-0563.

Join The Chamber

As a member, you are helping to strengthen our local economy, promote the community, provide networking opportunities, represent the interests of business with government and take political action.

As your Chamber of Commerce, we work to bring you more business, create better connections, make you more visible and help you work smarter. Your membership is a good investment in the future of our community and your business.

We offer membership for all business sizes, nonprofits, retired individuals or those not working in an organization or business. If you are an individual not affiliated with a business or are retired, you can contact a member of our membership department at (239) 549-6900 to see if the individual level is an opportunity that is available to you.

For more information on membership, please visit our website at www.capecoralchamber.com.

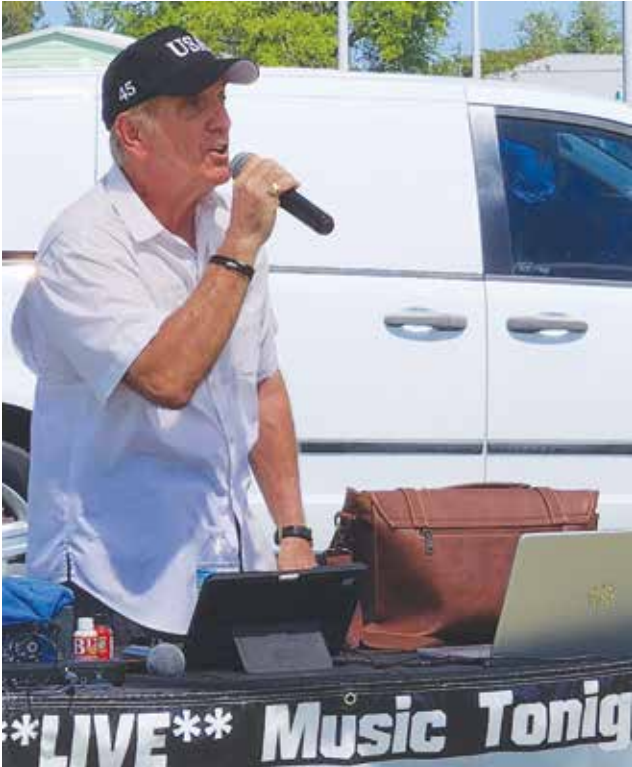


WWW.CAPECORALCHAMBER.COM

Cape Coral Museum Of History Brew Fest And Car Show



Brew Fest at Cultural Park – March 15



FGCU Annual Art Exhibition

And Cypress Lake High School Scholarship Awards

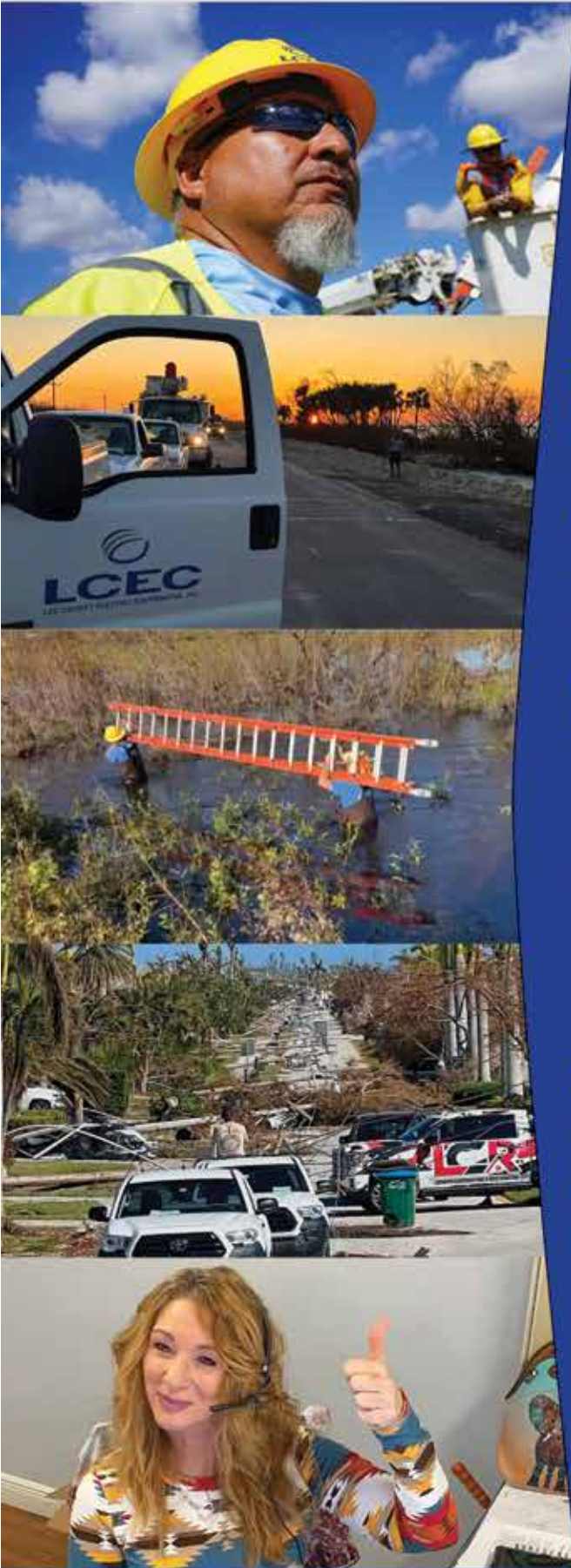
Southwest Florida Fine Craft Guild (SWFFCG) proudly announced the recipients of another round of scholarships during the FGCU annual art exhibition on March 20. This year, four talented student artists were honored for their creativity and dedication to the arts. Congratulations to Nicole G. M., Kaiya F., Eva P., and Elena R., who were selected as this year's scholarship winners. Each recipient received a \$500 scholarship to support their academic and artistic endeavors. SWFFCG is committed to fostering the growth and development of emerging artists, and these scholarships aim to help students as they continue to pursue their academic goals.



Left to right: Nicole G. M., Trudy Sampson (Treasurer), Kaiya F., Eva P., Elena R.



Left to right: Trudy Sampson (Treasurer), Kathrine G., Veronica P., Augustine H., Jamie L., Stephanie T. (not pictured).



PLAN. PREPARE. PATIENCE.

LCEC works year-round to harden the system and prepare for storm season. Utility customers are encouraged to prepare with a plan that includes special needs, evacuation, and a storm kit.

The plan
LCEC has a tried and true plan that is updated and practiced annually. The electric grid is built to be resilient. Resources and relationships are cultivated in case they are needed.

Preparation is key
LCEC has comprehensive vegetation management, inspection, and maintenance plans to mitigate the potential for outages. When power is interrupted, the LCEC team is prepared to respond as quickly and safely as possible.

When the lights are out, we are on!
Since 1940, LCEC employees, contractors, and vendors have been there to respond to every major event with a sense of urgency. We know our members depend on electricity to power their lives and we are committed to meeting the needs of our community 24/7/365.

Visit the [lcec.net Storm Center](#) for more information about Storm Preparedness.

HOW LCEC RESTORES POWER

Safety is the priority
During disaster response, and every day, safety is everyone's responsibility. While LCEC and all of our responding partners are laser-focused on restoring power as quickly as possible, safety is always the priority.

- Stay clear of downed power lines, as they may be energized.
- Puddles of water contacting downed lines are dangerous.
- Keep LCEC phone lines clear for emergency calls by only calling to report safety threats.

PEOPLE. POWER. POSSIBILITIES.

Touchstone Energy
Cooperatives

AFTER A MAJOR EVENT... HERE'S HOW THE RESTORATION PROCESS WORKS

STEP 1. DAMAGE ASSESSMENT
Includes physical inspection of our facilities. Once damage assessments have been made, LCEC begins repairs.

STEP 2. CRITICAL REPAIRS
We repair main circuits and restore critical facilities such as hospitals, police, and fire stations.

STEP 3. QUICKLY & SAFELY
Repair lines that get the greatest number of customers on as soon as possible.

STEP 4. REMAINING OUTAGES
Restoring power to those small pockets or individuals still without power.

[www.lcec.net](#)

The Guild also celebrated the artistic achievements of Cypress Lake High School's talented students on the evening of Feb. 28, during a special awards ceremony they recognized outstanding young artists for their exceptional work. Four students were honored with scholarships, each receiving \$250. The winners include Kathrine G., Veronica P., Jamie L., and Stephanie T. In addition to these awards, Augustine H. was presented with the Brian J. Duddy Memorial Scholarship, a scholarship of \$1,200, recognizing Augustine's outstanding artistic talent and potential. The award was presented by Terry Lawler, a respected figure in the local arts community, in memory of Brian J. Duddy, whose passion for the arts continues to inspire young creators.

The Southwest Florida Fine Craft Guild, a nonprofit artist collective in Southwest Florida, is proud to offer scholarships to students who demonstrate exceptional artistic ability within the local community. Our scholarships are open to students from all backgrounds and levels of experience, providing financial support to help cover tuition, studio costs, and other expenses related to artistic education.

Our expert panel of art judges carefully reviews each piece of artwork submitted, awarding those who show the most creative drive, cohesive collection, or strong artistic potential. The focus is not on the perfection of the artwork, as we recognize that growth is part of the artistic journey, but rather on the ability to evoke emotion, tell a story, and captivate the viewer.

Funds raised through our events, raffles, and donations support our Art Scholarship program, benefiting local youth at Cypress Lake High School, FGCU, and the Cape Coral Art Center.

To learn more about our endeavors as well as view the winning artwork, visit our website at [www.swffcg.org](#).

Sudoku Answers

6	9	2	8	5	1	3	4	7
4	8	1	7	3	9	2	5	6
3	7	5	6	2	4	9	8	1
9	6	3	1	4	7	8	2	5
7	5	8	9	6	2	4	1	3
1	2	4	3	8	5	6	7	9
8	1	9	4	7	6	5	3	2
5	4	7	2	9	3	1	6	8
2	3	6	5	1	8	7	9	4

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